

# THUNDER OVER EUROPE

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*By*

E. ALEXANDER  
P O W E L L

*ILLUSTRATED*



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To

THE HONOURABLE JOHN ROSEBURY MONSON  
of

*Burton Hall, Lincoln, England*

*whose unfailing cheerfulness  
and helpfulness, often under  
trying conditions, made him  
an ideal motoring companion.*

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E. ALEXANDER POWELL

“Monte Verde”

Mariel

Pinar del Rio

Cuba

March, 1931

## FOREWORD

In writing a book of this description much information not readily available to the public is required. To obtain it the author frequently must request from the governments concerned certain privileges and facilities for observation and investigation. Yet, by the acceptance of such privileges, and the social courtesies which usually accompany them, the author places himself under an implied obligation. Thus, if he criticizes the policy of a government which has aided him, or expresses opinions which are unpalatable to it, he is accused of ingratitude and bad taste. If, on the other hand, he seeks to retain the good-will of a government by ignoring or whitewashing unpleasant facts, he breaks faith with those who buy his books. The question arises then: should he deceive his readers by refraining from criticism; or should he state the facts bluntly, as he sees them, regardless of whose toes he treads on?

It has always seemed to me that an author's paramount obligation is to his readers. They buy his books on the assumption that he will tell them the unvarnished truth,

without fear or favor. And that is precisely what I shall strive to do in the following pages. My views and conclusions will assuredly give offense to certain governments and individuals who have shown me courtesies and given me assistance. My views and conclusions may be wrong, but at least they are my own. I shall be charged, no doubt, with being anti-French, anti-Polish, pro-Italian, pro-German. Yet, believe it or not, I am neither for nor against any nation or any government as such. I am, however, bitterly opposed to the policies of certain governments and of certain political factions because I believe that those policies are dangerous and, if persisted in, will eventually bring on another war.

I recognize and admire the many fine qualities of the French people, as attested by the half-dozen books I wrote during the Great War, but I believe that the policy being pursued by the French government—a policy characterized by secret treaties, military alliances, and enormous loans for military purposes to chauvinistic states that are already overmilitarized—will sooner or later bring France and Europe to the brink of disaster. I detested the old Imperial Germany and all that it stood for—this, too, I made amply clear in my war-time books—but I sympathize with the young German Republic because it is not being given the square deal to which

## FOREWORD

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even the vanquished are entitled. I applauded the reconstitution of Poland as one of the few really fine achievements of the Peace Conference, but I have no sympathy with a belligerent Poland which dreams of expanding its present frontiers at the expense of its neighbors.

Let me say here that no government and no people in Europe *want* war. Yet one-half of Europe believes that unless the existing situation is altered another war is inevitable, while the other half is just as firmly convinced that war will result if any attempt is made to change the status quo. And both parties honestly believe themselves to be in the right.

The most discouraging feature of the whole business is the moral cowardice and lack of vision of the European statesmen, who, with a few notable exceptions, are only politicians, and of mediocre intellectual caliber at that. They are cowards because they are afraid of public opinion. That is, they are afraid of losing votes. They have neither the unselfishness nor the moral courage to avert war by backing down. That is why they did not understand what President Wilson meant when he said that there was such a thing as a nation being “too proud to fight.”

What Europe needs, and needs desperately, is a political housecleaning. She should sweep out her hidebound

diplomats and professional politicians and replace them with experienced, hard-headed business men who recognize the value of compromise, who know how to give and take, who think that maintaining the balance of power is not nearly so important as balancing the budget. "Votes be damned!" such men would say. "Let's get together and work out an arrangement which will be reasonably fair to everyone concerned." That would end the danger of war overnight.

Of course, nothing of the sort is going to happen because the politicians are too strongly entrenched. They control the machinery of government. So, barring a miracle, things will drift from bad to worse; friction, hatreds, armaments will steadily increase, until some incident, perhaps unimportant in itself, will precipitate another conflict. Save for certain eventualities, however, such as an attempt by the Poles to seize East Prussia or a clash between the Yugoslavs and the Italians, I do not anticipate war for some time to come. For how long? Well, I have no desire to pose as a prophet, but I'm willing to hazard the guess that it will not come before 1940.

E. ALEXANDER POWELL

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“War will never be exterminated by any agency until men and nations become more spiritual and adopt the principle of brotherhood and concord rather than antagonism, competition and superiority of brute force.”

MAHATMA GANDHI



# THUNDER OVER EUROPE



## CHAPTER I

### STORM CLOUDS

HAVE you, perchance, ever noticed the charts issued by the United States Weather Bureau? The ones, I mean, on which are indicated by shading and arrows the areas of barometric depression and the courses of approaching storms. Yes? With your permission, then, I shall spread before you in the following pages a word-map of Europe drawn in similar fashion. But in this case the shaded areas will denote political instead of barometric depressions; the arrows will point to approaching storms of steel and gas.

Leaving aside such purely local agitations as those in Spain, where a revolution may at any time transform the monarchy into a republic without affecting the rest of the continent, four clearly defined areas of political disturbance spread themselves in dark blots athwart the map of Europe.

The first stretches along the German-Polish frontier from the Baltic all the way down to Silesia.

The second hovers above the Danube Basin from Vienna right away to the Black Sea.

The third obscures the Adriatic's eastern shore and, indeed, much of the Balkan peninsula.

The fourth blankets the whole of Soviet Russia.

There you have the four great storm clouds which threaten Europe. Whether, in a much nearer future than most people dream of, they will burst in a deluge of death to the rattle of musketry and the roar of cannon, or whether they will be dispelled by the fresh winds of political sanity and national common sense, depends in the final analysis upon six men—Benito Mussolini, Raymond Poincaré, Joseph Pilsudski, Eduard Beneš, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin.

Before you raise your eyebrows over the names in this list, let me make it amply clear that they are to be taken only as symbols. Though certain of these men are all-powerful in their respective countries, others are very far from exercising complete political domination. It is not as individuals that they deserve attention, for any one of them may pass into political oblivion or the grave overnight. Their importance lies in the segments of national sentiment which they represent, the policies for which they stand.

There are others, it is true, whose names loom large



*Acme Newspictures*

ARISTIDE BRIAND

Foreign Minister of France and by long odds Europe's greatest statesman

in newspaper headlines—Briand, for example,—by long odds Europe's greatest statesman—Tardieu, Hindenburg, MacDonald, Bethlen. But they do not count as the others count, when all is said and done. By that I mean that their influence on the course of European events is pacificatory rather than provocative, resistive rather than aggressive. They connote no danger. The six I have named, and they alone, have between them the power to precipitate or to avert the impending storm.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NAZIS

IN our scrutiny of the European political weather map we may as well start with Germany. Not that the storm clouds are darker there than elsewhere, but because the repercussion of events in the Fatherland are bound to be felt throughout the world.

I should warn you at the outset, however, that it is impossible to grasp the significance of what is happening, or is likely to happen, in Germany unless you are prepared to revise your whole conception of the German people. For a new generation is coming into political power in the Reich—a generation which has come of age since 1918.

These young Germans are of a type unfamiliar to most foreigners. They have little in common with the arrogant, swashbuckling, scar-faced youths who in pre-war days swaggered along the pavements of German university towns. Few of them saw active service during the war. Of the old Imperial Germany, aggressive,

ruthless, dominated by militarism, they retain only vague recollections. (The years have slipped by so rapidly that it is hard for us to realize that men of thirty were lads of thirteen when the great conflict began.) The Germany in which they have grown up was a land of discouragement, disillusionment, dejection. But they are not downhearted, these new Germans. All the way from the Baltic to the Black Forest I have seen them, under their flaunting banners, high-headed, clear-eyed, robust, marching and singing. They have not only a passionate love for but a profound faith in the Fatherland.

With the same vigor they have displayed in developing their bodies by physical culture, and in restoring their country's industries by hard work, they have set themselves to the task of rearing a new nation on the débris of the old. Under the leadership of a slender, fiery, fanatic-eyed Bavarian named Adolf Hitler, a dynamo in boots, they have formed a parliamentary party of their own—the National Socialists, or “Nazis” as they are popularly known.

In organizing his party Hitler has followed the pattern set by the Italian Fascists, even to the Fascist salute. The members of its uniformed legions are distinguished by peaked caps and on the sleeves of their brown shirts

is embroidered the swastika emblem—perhaps as a symbol of good luck but more probably because of its traditional association with iconoclasm.

The growth of the Nazis has been astounding. At the general election in 1928 they could win only twelve seats in the Reichstag. Today, the second strongest party in Germany, they have 107. In the same brief period their voting strength has increased from eight hundred thousand to nearly six and a half million. In another two or three years—perhaps long before then—they may well be in political control of the Reich. Indeed, it is generally agreed among responsible Germans that in the event of a new general election the present voting strength of the Nazis would be doubled.

That the strength and significance of the movement should cause the gravest alarm both within and without the Reich is perfectly understandable. For it is spreading across Germany like fire in dry grass. To underestimate it is folly. To deride it is insane.

“A square deal for Germany,” though not a literal translation, may be taken as expressing the spirit of the Nazi slogan. Just what does that mean? Well, it depends upon whom you ask.

A moderate-minded Nazi—and there are moderates in the party—will tell you that it means that Germany,



*Acme Newspictures*

#### MUSSOLINI'S LITTLE BROTHER

Adolf Hitler, the Bavarian Fascist leader who has patterned the Nazi organization after that of the Italian Black Shirts and has made it a political power in Germany

for thirteen years a prisoner of war, must be free as other nations are free. That she will no longer continue in what amounts to a state of vassalage. That if Germany is to remain disarmed then her neighbors must keep their pledges to disarm also. That the more glaring injustices of the peace treaties must be rectified. That the sins of the fathers shall not be paid for by their sons and grandsons and great-grandsons. That Communism in Germany must be torn out, root and branch. The moderates believe, however, that this program can be achieved by ballots instead of bullets. Once they gain control of the government they propose to pursue a policy of firmness which, so they contend, Germany's enemies will not dare, or will not deem it wise, to oppose by force of arms.

Now let a real, rip-snorting, fire-eating, saber-rattling Nazi fanatic speak. If his utterances are anything more than so much hot air they must be taken as meaning that the Nazis stand for Fascism and chauvinism carried to the *n*th degree. They mean the tearing up of the peace treaties and the repudiation of the war debts. They mean the restoration of the German colonies and the wholesale revision of the German frontiers as drawn at Versailles. They mean the lifting of all restrictions on armament. They mean not only anti-Communism

but anti-Semitism. They mean, in short, that Germany will fight, if need be, to regain a place in the sun.

Even should the Nazis gain political control of the Reich it may be doubted, however, whether they would actually attempt to put into execution a program so bristling with economic absurdities and international challenges. The danger lies in the fact that the Nazi extremists hold in contempt all appeals to reason, experience or logic. They assert that Germany was betrayed by the Communists in 1918 and by the republican leaders when the peace treaties were signed. They reiterate the story of the Fatherland's betrayal and degradation. They insist that unless its youth dedicates itself to the task of national salvation Germany is doomed.

No one who has not traveled extensively in Germany of late can visualize the fire and passion and determination which animate the Nazis or the torrential fashion in which the movement has swept the youth of the country off its feet. In the universities the Nazi creed has become a religion and Adolf Hitler is its prophet. It is young Germany in revolt against foreign domination and domestic vacillation. To find a parallel to the existing situation you must go back a century and a quarter, to the days of the Tugenbund, when the writings of men like Fichte and Arndt, the military genius

of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, the political leadership of the great minister Stein, effected the moral regeneration of Prussia and ended the domination of Napoleon.

Now, this passionate, chauvinistic creed would not make much headway were Germany fairly prosperous, reasonably contented, tolerably satisfied with its status in the world. But it is none of these. The extent of the economic crisis is truly appalling. More than a tenth of the total population of the Reich is out of work. Millions are without enough to eat. The making of white bread has been forbidden by government edict. Added to this is the realization of the people that they are utterly helpless against foreign aggression. It is the daily augmentation of the army of unemployed, the steady increase in destitution and suffering, the deep-seated feeling of impotence and humiliation, that gives the Nazis their strength.

The Nazi leaders believe that, with the aid of the Nationalists (and perhaps even with the assistance of the Communists, who also would like to bring about the downfall of the government, though for quite different reasons), they can force a new general election. So rapidly is their strength increasing that there is probably considerable justification for their belief that they could

win that election, dominate the Reichstag, and form a government of their own. Their next step would be to establish a dictatorship on the Mussolini pattern. What might happen thereafter would be on the knees of the gods.

The Nazis insist that France, rather than go to war in order to enforce unjust treaties and collect reparations, with all the appalling hazards and consequences of such a struggle, would hearken to an aroused Germany that spoke in the voice of righteous wrath. France, the Nazis point out, is perfectly safe within her own borders, but were she to make an unprovoked assault on Germany there is no saying what might happen. She would certainly forfeit the sympathy of the English-speaking nations and it is at least conceivable that Italy might intervene. Moreover, the fiasco of the Ruhr taught the French that the invasion of even a disarmed country is an unprofitable undertaking.

The argument, though specious, is not sound. For what the Nazis fail to explain convincingly is how, if they shake foreign confidence, they are to obtain the foreign credits on which depends the financial solvency of the Reich. By their anti-Semitic demonstrations they have already alienated the sympathies of the great Jewish bankers. When all is said and done, it is not the ad-

vance of foreign bayonets which will hold the Nazis in check, but the retreat of foreign gold.

The anti-Semitism of the Nazis, it may be remarked in passing, is not wholly unjustified. For the Nazis are convinced that Germany's economic woes are largely due to the Jews. It cannot be denied that in the dark days immediately following the war, when Germany was prostrate and her people on the verge of starvation, the German Jews made enormous fortunes at the expense of their country. Most of the Jews, so the Nazis maintain, engaged in profiteering, and a profiteer is a traitor.

Many people refuse to take the Nazis seriously. And many newspapers, for that matter. But it is well to remember that there were likewise many people and many newspapers who did not take the Bolsheviks or the Fascists seriously either. It is, moreover, rather difficult to make light of the fact that of the 491 seats in the Reichstag the Nazis already hold 107.

Others are convinced that the Nazis constitute a standing threat to the peace of Europe. This belief has been strengthened by the bellicose utterances of the Nazi leaders. But perhaps these utterances, like those of Mussolini, should not be taken too seriously. They may be intended for political use for home consumption. Nor should the fact be lost sight of that the Nazis rep-

resent the youth of Germany, and that Youth, particularly when sitting pretty, is often arrogant, intemperate and strident.

It is easy to understand the acute uneasiness which the Nazi movement is causing the governments in Paris, Warsaw and Prague. *They* want things to continue in Germany as heretofore. They do not want to see the Reich rehabilitated politically, industrially or even spiritually. They are not in the least concerned as to whether the German people are hungry, hopeless. All that concerns them is how Germany can be kept permanently helpless and at the same time be able to pay the reparations down to the last gold mark.

If foreign governments view the Nazi movement with uneasiness, the German government views it with unconcealed alarm. Though in their hearts the patriotic and farsighted men who actually control the machinery of the Reich doubtless sympathize with the aims of the Nazis, they realize that should the cabinet fall, should Hitler and his hot-heads gain control of the government, they would almost certainly involve the country in serious political and economic difficulties, if not in war, at the very time when it most desperately needs foreign sympathy and aid.

Though I find it difficult to take the toothbrush-

mustached Bavarian seriously, he nevertheless represents a power that must be reckoned with as was proved in December, 1930, when the Nazis forced the government to ban the American-made film, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, in spite of the prime minister of Prussia having given the picture his official approval. Reminiscent of the use of castor oil by the Italian Fascists some years ago was the employment by the Brown Shirts of white mice, snakes and stink bombs as a means of emptying the picture houses which were showing this film.

The Hitlerites have already shaken domestic confidence. German economists have estimated that the Nazi demonstrations in the summer of 1930, by terrifying the Jews, driving their money out of the country, and making it necessary for the Reichsbank to halt the flight of capital by raising the discount rate to five per cent, cost Germany 1,600,000,000 marks, or \$380,800,000. This may be, and probably is, an exaggeration, but there can be no denying that Germany's credit has been seriously damaged by the fear both at home and abroad that further Hitlerite victories at the polls might plunge Germany into civil war. My own feeling, let me remark parenthetically, is that, no matter where the political wheel-of-fortune stops, there is very little likelihood

of a revolution in any form or of seizure of power by a Nazi dictator.

There is another angle from which the picture should receive consideration. Communism—though it often masquerades in the guise of Socialism—is much stronger in Germany than the world has been led to suppose. So long as things go tolerably well in Germany, however, Communism is no serious menace. But it is entirely conceivable that the country may reach a stage of impoverishment, discouragement and desperation where Communism would be emboldened to raise its head. This the Nazis will never tolerate. They are implacable foes of Communism. And they propose to stamp it out in the Fatherland as ruthlessly as the Fascists did in Italy. Of the two evils, the Brown Shirts are certainly preferable to the Reds.

I doubt if any group of men in the world today are in a more difficult and trying position than President Hindenburg and the members of his cabinet. They are staggering under stupendous burdens, facing seemingly insoluble problems. They are damned if they do and damned if they don't. To convince foreign nations of Germany's good faith they must comply with unpopular and unjust treaties. To insure her financial solvency they must impose new taxes and force through new

measures of economy. In so doing they have lent enormous weight to the assertions of the Nazis that Germany is being degraded by its own government, that it is being bled white in order to satisfy the greed of a France that is already swollen with gold. It was a struggle for the cabinet to persuade the country that a reparations moratorium could not be seriously discussed until domestic finances had first been put in order. It was a still more difficult matter to induce it to overlook Polish aggressions until a more favorable moment.

The elder statesmen, headed by that grim old soldier, Marshal Hindenburg, realize that Germany's time is not yet. They are playing a waiting game. Time is the very essence of their strategy. They put up with the humiliations of the peace treaties and the burdens of the reparations because they know that every day that passes sees Germany stronger.

This may be taken by some as meaning that the President and his cabinet are plotting vengeance and violence, that they are awaiting another *Der Tag*. I mean nothing of the sort. They are, on the contrary, sincerely devoted to peace, anxious for conciliation instead of conflict. Yet every time they try to warn the outside world of the appalling gravity of Germany's internal situation, those warnings are interpreted in Paris, in

Warsaw, in Prague—and not infrequently in the United States—as evidence of warlike intent and an attempt to evade obligations.

The men who at present hold the whip and reins realize that Germany must exercise patience and restraint. That to obtain foreign credits she must retain foreign confidence. That she must put her house in order. They know full well that not until the nation is vastly stronger than it is at present can it demand instead of plead that the very real grievances which are the basis of the Nazi program be adjusted.

That is why the reasonable and conservative elements in Germany regard the goings-on of Herr Hitler and his adherents with such unconcealed apprehension. They are afraid that the structure of international confidence and credit so painstakingly built up by the wise policy of Stresemann will be destroyed. They are terrified that the Nazis will shake the tree before the fruit is ripe.

I have already stated that I do not believe that the Nazis will be able to overthrow the government. That is only a personal opinion. Events may prove me a poor prophet. But even an out-and-out Nazi victory could not result in the launching of an immediate German attack upon any country. But it could retard, if not

prevent, that coöperation between Germany and the outside world which is alike essential to German recovery and to peace, progress and prosperity in Europe.

The next few years—perhaps the next few months—are bound to form one of the most significant periods in German history, for the present contest will mark the turning-point in the country's regeneration. From the struggle now in progress will emerge a new Germany, animated by a spirit far different from that of the Germany of the past dozen years. And it has been the Nazis who have instilled this new spirit into the drooping Fatherland, who have yanked Germany out of her dejection and despair. Hot-heads, irresponsible brats, fools who rock the boat, call them what you will, yet you can neither ignore nor laugh off six and a half million ballots . . . or bayonets. The inescapable fact remains that the Nazis must be reckoned with whether the rest of the world likes it or not.

## CHAPTER III

### THE OTHER GERMANS

PERHAPS I have not made it sufficiently clear that the Nazis by no means voice the sentiments of the whole German people. The movement marks a clearly defined schism between Germans under and over thirty-five. Few of its adherents took any active part in the war. The Germans who had reached maturity when the great conflict began, who had personal experience of its horrors and miseries and sufferings, have scant sympathy with the Nazis and their ultra-nationalistic aims. To them the Nazi program seems perilously akin to the militaristic policy of the old Imperial Germany under another name.

The Nazi, then, represents only a segment, though a considerable and extremely vociferous segment, of German opinion. Let me see if I, a foreigner, can give you some idea of what the Average German—the small shopkeeper, the petty official, the skilled artisan, the well-to-do farmer, the white-collar man—thinks about it all.

Let it be clearly understood, to begin with, that the Average German knew next to nothing about the causes of the war. He was on friendly terms with his neighbors. He had not the slightest desire to fight France or any other country. Of Russia he was inclined to be vaguely distrustful, but nothing more. Why should he have wanted war? Things were going well with him. Business was booming in Germany; taxation was not oppressive; beer was cheap and plentiful. All in all, it was a pleasant world to live in.

But, being a guileless person, with a one-track mind, he believed everything that the propagandists told him. He accepted without question, at its face value, the assertion that jealous and perfidious neighbors were threatening the Fatherland. With that conviction embedded in his mind he went to war and for four years fought against an embattled world with a courage and tenacity which have never been surpassed.

Then, as 1918 was drawing to a close, came the sudden collapse, the great debacle. The Kaiser and the imperial family fled. A score of princely houses disappeared overnight. The Empire crumbled. The world turned upside down.

But, though naturally slow of thought, it did not take the Average German long to recognize the folly and

criminal stupidity of the old régime. That is why he gave such whole-hearted support to the republican administration which succeeded it. He felt like a man who has begun to convalesce after a long and dreadful illness. Brighter days ahead for himself and the Fatherland. Spring was coming. Incredible as it may seem, he actually believed the unctuous assurances of the victors that they harbored no thoughts of spoliation or conquest, that they sought only to right the wrongs of oppressed peoples and bring lasting peace to a distracted world, that there was to be a new deal all round.

But the Treaty of Versailles proved a rude awakening to the Average German. Though he had laid aside his rifle and hung up his bandolier on the strength of the pledges contained in President Wilson's Fourteen Points, he soon found that those points had been made a mockery by the cynical and avaricious European politicians. He saw Germany stripped of her army, her navy, her fortresses, her merchant marine, her colonies, and of thousands of square miles of her European territory. He heard her condemned to pay to the victors a sum so vast as to be beyond the grasp of the human mind. He saw more than seven millions of his countrymen, as German in speech and blood and tradition as



*Underwood & Underwood*

FIELD MARSHAL PAUL VON HINDENBURG, PRESIDENT OF THE  
GERMAN REPUBLIC

It is a fortunate thing for Germany and for Europe that the Reich has so sane  
and strong a pilot at the helm

himself, placed under the rule of other and unfriendly nations. He found, though too late, that he had been bamboozled into laying down his weapons. Yet, being disarmed and helpless, he had no alternative than to accept these terms. But he felt—and still feels—that he was tricked, deceived, defrauded.

During the four years that followed Versailles, however, the Average German began to regain some small measure of confidence in what the future held in store for him. There stirred within him a faint feeling of hope. Despite his impoverishment and misery and humiliation he clung rather pathetically to the belief that a new and better Europe was in the making.

Then came the invasion of the Ruhr. To that adventure, engineered by the vindictive and relentless Poincaré, might aptly be applied the cynical words of Talleyrand: "It was worse than a crime; it was a mistake." It gained nothing for France; it did much to alienate English sympathy; it all but completed the wreck of Germany; and it set back the hands of Franco-German understanding by many years.

The resentment felt by the Average German over the invasion of the Ruhr was intensified by the policy pursued by the French in the Rhineland. Nothing that

could be accomplished by intrigue was left undone to foster disloyalty and encourage revolution in that purely German province, to detach it from the Reich.

Nor did it make for good feeling between the victors and the vanquished when France, animated solely by a desire to humiliate the Germans, garrisoned portions of the occupied territory with colored soldiery. "But we did not use black troops," the French protest. Quite true. They used brown men and yellow ones.

As might be expected, these systematic irritations and evidences of vindictiveness have had their effect on the Average German. There is not the same desire among the mass of the German people to effect a reconciliation with France that there was a dozen years ago.

But, if the hand that was timidly extended in amity immediately after the war has been gradually withdrawn, it is not primarily due to the incidents in the Ruhr and the Rhineland. Those were only contributory factors. There is the bitterness which always exists between a debtor and his most pressing creditor. The Germans see France the most prosperous nation in Europe, with no unemployment and the second largest gold reserve in the world, so it is hardly surprising that they should ask themselves why they and their children and their children's children should toil unceasingly to

increase French wealth. Anger rankles in German breasts that France should have appropriated thousands of square miles of Germany's colonial territory when she already had more colonies than she knew what to do with. But what causes deeper resentment than all his other grievances put together is the Average German's realization that France, by her system of military alliances and her refusal to consider any revision of the peace treaties, seeks to keep Germany permanently in chains.

Yet, despite this accumulation of bitterness and resentment, the Average German neither contemplates nor desires a war of revenge against France. He is at heart a Conservative. He loves order and has an ingrained respect for the law. If he has been led to vote the Nazi or the Communist ticket it is not because he wants either a foreign war or a domestic revolution, but because it is the only way open to him of registering his dissatisfaction with the prevailing disorder of things.

He refuses to believe that the French stand in perpetual fear of another German onslaught. Fully aware of the defenseless and enfeebled condition of his own country and the overwhelming military strength of France, the very idea is to him preposterous.

And it must seem equally preposterous to anyone who compares the military establishments of the two nations.

|                           | FRANCE      | GERMANY                 |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Infantry regiments        | 223         | 21                      |
| Cavalry "                 | 86          | 18                      |
| Artillery "               | 104         | 7                       |
| Tank "                    | 19          | none                    |
| Engineer battalions       | 56          | 7                       |
| Heavy artillery groups    | 282         | none                    |
| Aviation squadrons        | 135         | none                    |
| Balloon companies         | 18          | none                    |
| Total peace establishment | 541,154 men | 99,191 men <sup>1</sup> |

“The trouble with France,” a distinguished American soldier remarked to me not long ago, “is that she is suffering from an inferiority complex.”

<sup>1</sup> These figures are from the Statesman’s Year Book for 1930. Other authorities place the strength of France’s peace-time military establishment at 650,700 men.

## CHAPTER IV

### FRANCO-GERMAN FRICTION

THERE are in France two schools of thought regarding Germany.

One, led by Aristide Briand, believes that Germany—or, to put it more explicitly, the present German government and the conservative and responsible majority of the German people—is acting in good faith and fully intends to carry out the provisions of the peace treaties. But, though M. Briand is beyond all question sincere in his championship of Franco-German reconciliation, his widely heralded scheme for a United States of Europe is perhaps not quite so altruistic as many assume. Need I point out that, could it be realized, it would spike down the present frontiers of Europe forever?

The other school, with Raymond Poincaré as its prophet, is convinced that Germany is unreconciled and unrepentant, that she is hard at work attempting to circumvent the provisions of the Versailles pact and is secretly preparing for a day of reckoning.

The latter school contends that though Germany is

restricted by treaty to a professional army of 100,000 men enlisted for twelve years, this does not begin to represent the real numbers that she can put into the field. It is pointed out that 80,000 trained men have already obtained their discharges from the Reichswehr for one reason or another. That there are 150,000 Schutzpolizei or gendarmes; there are railway and customs guards; there are the various semi-military organizations such as the Sturm Abteilung, the Stahlhelm and the Reichsbanner; and, finally, there are two million able-bodied veterans of the Great War. As to matériel—heavy artillery, tanks, aircraft, gas, and other weapons forbidden to Germany by treaty—evasion, according to the French alarmists, has taken the form of organizing German industry so that it can begin mass production the moment war is declared.

Yet France admitted the completeness of Germany's disarmament when she consented to the withdrawal of the Allied troops from the Rhine five years before the date set in the peace treaty.

Suppose we digress for a moment at this point in order to glance at these semi-military organizations which are causing such apprehension to Germany's immediate neighbors and to the government of the Reich itself. Though it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable figures,

it is safe to say that the combined memberships of the five major fighting corps total well over four million men.

Beginning on the extreme Right are the "storm troops" of the Nationalist Socialist party, known as the Sturm Abteilung, the fighting branch of Herr Hitler's political organization. These young rough-and-readies—many of them lads still in their teens—number only about 90,000, the corps being kept small purposely in order to increase its mobility and effectiveness. The Brown Shirts pattern themselves after Italy's Black Shirt militia; they are highly trained, and might prove extremely troublesome to the government in the event of a Nazi *putsch*.

Perhaps a shade less chauvinistic is the Stahlhelm, the Steel Helmets, composed of a million or more war veterans. This corps, which boasts the largest percentage of trained soldiers, is primarily devoted to the cause of keeping Germany's fighting strength equal to that of her neighbors. Perhaps because of its significant name and the impressive nature of its demonstrations this outfit has been taken rather more seriously than it deserves, for its members, like those of the American Legion, are rapidly becoming too old and fat to fight. Recognizing this, its leaders have formed two subsidiary corps—the Ringstahlhelm, which includes adults who did not see

service in the war; and the Jungstahlhelm, composed of lads between seventeen and twenty-one—and are now organizing a third recruited from youngsters under seventeen.

The smallest of the five major corps is the Jung Deutsche Orden, or Order of Young Germans, commonly known as the Jungdo, which has only about 20,000 names on its muster-rolls. Originally founded as an ultra-nationalist, anti-Semitic, anti-Communist league, the organization now seems to be drifting toward the Center, though its members do not seem to know just where they stand.

The Reichsbanner is the only one of the five corps whose members are under oath to defend the Republic and the Constitution of Weimar. Though its numbers are impressive—probably in the neighborhood of three millions—it is not very highly regarded for its fighting qualities, usually coming off second-best in its frequent bloody clashes with Hitler's Brown Shirts.

And finally, on the extreme Left, we find the Communist corps of 120,000 highly drilled and, it is believed, well armed, men. This organization, which takes its orders from Moscow and of which I shall have more to say later on, was originally known as the Rotfront (Red Front), but when it was disbanded by the government

upon the demand of the Allies, the Communists promptly reconstituted it under the euphemistic name of Red Sportsmen.

These five corps, dedicated to the defense of political ideals which range from Fascism to Communism, all train their members in military exercises as far as the law allows—and then some. All have developed a high degree of proficiency in gymnastics, in drilling and field maneuvering, and there is little doubt that rifle practice is being carried on surreptitiously.

In certain respects the aims of these five organizations are as far apart as the poles. Thus, the Brown Shirts have in view the establishment of a "Third Reich" under Nazi domination. The Steel Helmets intend to keep Germany's trained reserves on a par with those of her neighbors so that she will be able to offer effective resistance to a French or Polish invasion. The Reichsbanner, and probably the Jungdos, are for the preservation of the Republic in its present form, the former being sworn foes of Fascism. The Red Front Fighters (or Sportsmen, if you prefer) are completely under the control and guidance of the Third International in Moscow and are assiduously preparing for the coming of the world revolution. But all five organizations have this in common: all protest the rape of the Corridor and Upper Silesia by

Poland; all await a favorable opportunity to rid Germany of the intolerable burden imposed by the Young Plan; all demand that the wrongs of the Versailles treaty be rectified.

For the Allies to attempt to suppress these organizations is obviously absurd. Officially disbanded, they promptly spring up again under another name, as witness the metamorphosis of the Red Front Fighters into the Red Sportsmen. It would be ridiculous to assert that in case of war these four million-odd men, many of them veterans, would have no military value, but, on the other hand, it is a mistake to appraise their value too highly. When it comes to actual fighting under the conditions of modern warfare, these corps would possess about the same degree of efficiency as the military units of our universities and somewhat more than the American Legion.

In any event, they should not be taken too seriously abroad, for their menace is not directed primarily against Germany's neighbors, but against the government of the Reich itself. Upon second thought, however, it seems to me that their greatest threat lies in their systematic mental and physical preparation of the children of Germany for future wars.

Of course any experienced and unbiased military man will tell you that the idea of Germany being able to



*Acme Newspictures*

#### GERMANY'S MOST RELENTLESS ENEMY

By his invasion of the Ruhr Raymond Poincaré set back the hands of Franco-German friendship many years

prepare for an invasion secretly, overnight, is chimerical, fantastic. The United States, with its vast wealth, its limitless resources, its one hundred twenty millions of people, discovered that and to its cost. We entered the Great War in April, 1917. When it ended nineteen months later we were just beginning to get into our stride. Meanwhile we had been depending upon our European allies for field artillery, ammunition, tanks, airplanes, machine guns. Does anyone seriously believe that within a few days we could mobilize our small and widely dispersed regular military establishment (which is scarcely larger than Germany's), the various units of the National Guard, our state and municipal police, our coast guards and customs inspectors, our high school cadets and Shriner drill companies, the members of the American Legion and other veterans of the late war, organize them into a modern army, arm and equip that army, and send it into battle against an entrenched, expectant and highly efficient enemy with the remotest chance of success? Anyone who believes that would believe anything.

Only a people as prone to hysteria as the French would seriously maintain that Germany, disarmed, impoverished, torn by internal dissension, and after more than a decade of foreign military supervision and con-

trol, could organize, arm and hurl against France, all within the space of a few hours, such an avalanche of men and matériel as would be required to reduce the formidable fortifications along the French frontier and to overcome the immensely powerful French army.

But the indisputable fact remains that there are a great number of timorous or excitable Frenchmen who sincerely believe this, just as there are a great number of Germans of the Nazi persuasion who would like to see it come true. If these two schools really represented national sentiment in their respective countries the outlook would be dark indeed. It is fortunate for Europe, and for the world, that the majorities in both countries are composed of saner minds, and doubly fortunate that the two countries have at their helms pilots of such sound judgment and consummate skill as Aristide Briand and Paul von Hindenburg.

France has found another reason for anxiety of late. Led by Emile Vandervelde, Socialist leader and former Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, a vigorous campaign has been launched in Belgium for the abolition of the military agreement which has existed since 1920 between that country and France. This agreement, which amounts to a military alliance, authorizes the collaboration in time of peace between the Belgian and

French general staffs with a view to organizing mutual measures of defense in the event of an attack by Germany. The matter did not receive much attention in Belgium until recently, however, when the French military authorities insisted that the elaborate system of fortifications which France is constructing between Switzerland and Luxemburg should be continued by Belgium along her eastern frontier to the sea.

But M. Vandervelde—who is a power in Belgium, where the Socialists are very strong—maintained that the Locarno pact had rendered a Franco-Belgian military alliance unnecessary, and that, were Belgium to accede to the demands of the French general staff and vote the enormous credits required for the construction of the proposed fortifications, it would serve to confirm the impression that Belgium was but a vassal state and would make it the more difficult to conclude an international agreement for the limitation of armaments. And if the French military alliance was permitted to continue, just what would be expected of Belgium, M. Vandervelde pertinently asked, should France become involved in a war in support of her eastern allies?

Yet, in spite of the strength of M. Vandervelde's arguments, in spite of the disfavor with which the British government was known to view the project because it

would compromise Belgium's neutrality, the plan received the approval of the Belgian Parliament. The significance of the Vandervelde campaign was not lost on Paris, however, where it caused more uneasiness than the government cared to admit. For it indicated a weakening in the system of military alliances which France has built up since the war; it marked the first attempt of a vassal state to break away from French tutelage and control.

Time will show, I believe, that France's military alliances in the east, which she has built up with the double-barreled motive of intimidating Germany into submission and acquiring the hegemony of Europe, are not a tower of strength but a source of weakness. She has taken under her wing a brood of young, irresponsible and headstrong fighting-bantams, any one of which may at any time involve its protector in war. In order to keep her protégés strong she has to arm and finance them, to espouse their quarrels, to guarantee their boundaries. She is under moral obligations to champion them—if need be with her armies—whether they are right or wrong.

The French statesmen are playing the old balance-of-power game to which President Wilson was so strenuously opposed and which has drenched Europe in

blood over and over again. Brought up on fears and hatreds, trained in the Metternich tradition, they are too cynical and hard-boiled to have any deep faith in Utopian ideals, too politically myopic to recognize the dawn of a new order of things. This does not strike me as enlightened statesmanship. The French would today have far less reason for uneasiness, they would sleep more soundly o' nights, had their statesmen taken to themselves the admonition addressed by George Washington to the American people to beware of entangling alliances.

France's belief that with the aid of her satellites, Poland and the Little Entente, she can keep Germany imprisoned for life is, of course, fantastic. Indeed, almost pathetic. Turn back the pages of history and you will see that Napoleon tried the same thing with Prussia and failed disastrously. By throwing Prussia into the arms of Russia he brought about his own downfall and ended French domination of the continent for more than a hundred years. And, with the substitution of Germany for Prussia, that is precisely what may happen again if France's present policy is persisted in. To keep a compact mass of sixty-five million intensely patriotic and extremely efficient people in the very middle of Europe under permanent restraint and, consequently,

under a permanent sense of injustice, is like leaving a gas-jet turned on in an unventilated room. Only a spark is needed to cause an explosion.

It is my carefully considered opinion that France has absolutely nothing to fear from Germany so far as her territorial integrity is concerned. The loss of Alsace-Lorraine is accepted more or less philosophically as a fortune of war by all level-headed Germans. The Saar, with its wealth of coal and iron, will be automatically restored to Germany by plebiscite in 1935 if not before then by negotiation. Among the responsible elements in Germany, as I have said before, there is no thought of a war of revenge.

The German leaders realize that an attack on France would be an act of stupendous folly. France is today the richest nation in Europe and the mightiest military power on earth. Her standing army outnumbers the German by more than five to one. She is amply supplied with heavy artillery, tanks and military aircraft, whereas Germany has none. Germany is permitted no trained reserves and her war veterans are already too old for first-line service, whereas France, by her system of conscription, is hard at work training the whole young manhood of the nation. Moreover, France is pushing to completion a formidable trench system of defense

along the entire length of her eastern frontier. Behind this system are the former German strongholds of Strasbourg, Metz and Thionville; the first-class fortresses of Belfort, Epinal, Toul and Verdun. The unreasoning fear of a disarmed and demoralized Germany by a nation with a supreme army and an impregnable system of defense seems to most disinterested observers hysterical and morbid.

The real danger is not in the West, but in the East.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CORRIDOR

As I have sought to make clear in the preceding chapter, there is no real threat to European peace along the Rhine. But far to the east, on the other side of Germany, a mighty storm is brewing. There the danger is acute, and in making this assertion I am perfectly aware that I shall be characterized as an alarmist and a war-scare monger. But neither denials nor ridicule can alter the facts. Nor does one need to be exceptionally acute of hearing to catch the rising growl of thunder.

Glance at the map and you will see that a narrow, V-shaped piece of territory along the lower Vistula provides Poland with an outlet to the Baltic. This is known to everyone save the Poles as the Corridor.

Now follow the frontier southward to the Carpathians and you will find a small Polish salient protruding like a sore thumb. This, one of the richest and most concentrated industrial areas on the continent, is Upper Silesia.

In these two regions you have the darkest spots on the political weather map of Europe.

It was a fundamental principle of the peace conference that Poland should have access to the sea, and in order to provide it Germany was compelled to cede to the reconstituted state the greater part of the province of West Prussia. This former German province, inhabited by a mixture of Germans, Poles, and an unidentified race called Kashubes, today forms the much-discussed Polish Corridor. The Corridor accomplishes two things: it strengthens Poland by giving her an outlet to the sea; it weakens Germany by severing the province of East Prussia from the rest of the Reich.

Better to visualize the situation you will conceive of the British Empire, after a victorious war with the United States, demanding the cession of Vermont and Massachusetts to Canada on the ground that the Canadians needed an outlet to the ice-free water and that both states were British anyway until the latter part of the eighteenth century, which was about the time Frederick the Great took Pomerelia—as West Prussia was then called—from Poland. If you can imagine this demand being carried out, Boston constituted a free city under the League of Nations (as Danzig has been) and

New Hampshire and Maine cut off from the rest of the Union by the Canadian corridor thus created, you will have as close a parallel as I can give you to the German-Polish situation.

Mind you, I am not questioning the abstract justice of Poland's claims to the Corridor, which are based on both ethnological and historical grounds. The region was certainly a part of the Kingdom of Poland at one time, and, for all I know, a majority of its inhabitants may be Polish. But there is a more pressing aspect than that to the situation. Marshal Pilsudski tersely summed it up when he told me that it was a question of the necessities of twenty-seven million Poles or the convenience of two and a half million East Prussians.

I *am*, however, questioning the wisdom of the solution. Do you remember how bitter was France's grief and resentment over her "lost provinces," how grim her determination eventually to regain them? Have you forgotten that for close on half a century the statue of Strasbourg in the Place de la Concorde was draped in mourning? The Germans, similarly, will never become reconciled to the Corridor. It must remain—if it does remain—a standing threat to the security of Poland and the peace of Europe.

The late Lord Balfour foresaw the danger as early

as February, 1917. "The stumbling block," said the great English statesman in discussing the question of Poland with Colonel House, "is the outlet to the sea. There can be no other excepting Danzig. This would leave an Alsace and Lorraine to rankle and fester for future trouble."

The disputed western boundaries of Poland are mainly due to President Wilson. With him, M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George rested the decision. Clemenceau knew definitely what he wanted—to smash Germany to atoms, so that she need never again be taken into consideration as a military or political power—and with tigerish ferocity he never swerved from his determination. Lloyd George, less embittered and more farsighted, wanted a Poland whose frontiers should be drawn on lines which would minimize the risks of future conflicts. President Wilson insisted on the creation of a Poland based on his pet policy of self-determination—yet he refused to agree to a plebiscite in West Prussia on the ground that any injustices would be rectified by the League of Nations. (How the gods must have smiled!) He had his way in the end . . . and left a legacy of high-explosive behind him.

From a cursory glance at an ordinary map it might be assumed that a considerable portion of the boundary

between the Polish Corridor and East Prussia was formed by the Vistula. For, according to ancient practice and the principles of international law, the boundary should coincide with the middle of the main navigable channel, thus giving Poles and East Prussians alike equal access to this great arterial river, on which the prosperity of the region so largely depends.

It was certainly the distinct understanding of President Wilson that the Vistula was to be internationalized, but the Polish leaders, headed by Paderewski, had their way in the end and a zone fifty yards in width along the east bank was given to Poland, so that along their ancient waterway the East Prussians have no riparian rights. Though the river flows within a stone's throw of their doors, they may not use it. This, of course, was in line with the determination of Poland that, if she was to be denied East Prussia, she would at least effect that province's economic ruin.

Nowhere else in the world, so far as I am aware, can be found a frontier which artificially cuts off a riverain people from the river. Yet it was evidently not the intention of the treaty-makers entirely to bar from this great waterway a population of two and a half millions, for a paragraph of the Versailles treaty explicitly states:

“The Principal Allied and Associated Powers will



## MAP SHOWING "DANGER-SPOTS" OF EUROPE

at the same time draw up regulations for assuring to the population of East Prussia to the fullest extent and under equitable conditions access to the Vistula and the use of it for themselves, their commerce, and their boats."

This guarantee has been carried out . . . and how! Near the village of Kurzebrack (which, though on the east side of the river, is Polish) the East Prussians are permitted access to the Vistula over a distance of four meters—*157 inches!* Even this permission is contingent, however, upon the production of a special Polish visa, to obtain which the applicant must journey to Dirschau (Tczew), twelve miles away. Imagine a peasant farmer being compelled to make a round trip of twenty-four miles, plus the usual delays at the passport office, if he wishes to drive his cattle down to the river for water!

Near Kurzebrack is—or, rather, was—the great Münsterwalde Bridge. It was one of the largest spans in Europe, carrying a railway line, two roads for vehicular traffic, and footways. The only bridge across the Vistula between Polish and German territory, it was of great commercial importance. Under the terms of the German-Polish agreement of 1925 there was a contractual obligation on the part of Poland to maintain this bridge, but in the spring of 1928, in spite of German protests,

demolition operations were begun and the bridge was closed to traffic. In order to cross the river, therefore, the East Prussians must either depend on ferries—which cannot operate in winter on account of the ice—or make a detour of nearly fifty miles.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Poles, while obeying the letter of the treaty, have grossly violated its spirit.

There is another and more serious aspect to the Vistula situation. On the East Prussian side of the river, near Marienwerder, there is a broad expanse of low-lying, alluvial land. This area was reclaimed from swamps with enormous patience and effort by the colonists, mainly Germans and Dutch from the Low Countries, who settled here during the Middle Ages.

To protect these farms the Vistula, like the Mississippi, must be kept rigidly within its fixed channel. Under German rule this was done by means of an elaborate system of dykes, supervised by a corps of government engineers and experts, who maintained constant vigilance in order to prevent disastrous inundations. But the Poles, who now control both banks, have, either from negligence or for financial and political reasons, permitted the accumulation of deposits of silt and sand,

thereby endangering navigation and threatening the dykes with destruction.

Granting sovereignty over the Vistula to Poland without international responsibility has not only destroyed the immense economic value which this great river formerly possessed, but it has placed in the hands of the Poles a weapon which they have not hesitated to employ against their neighbors. For Warsaw has persistently ignored the appeals of the industrious Prussian farmers, who live in constant fear of being flooded out. If these Germans are driven out, argues the Polish government, so much the better.

The truth is that the Vistula is not merely a barrier between Poland and East Prussia. So long as the present Polish policy continues it is a menace both to the prosperity of the region and to peace.

The Polish government has repeatedly assured the world that communication between East Prussia and the rest of the Reich is neither interrupted nor restricted, that the frontiers of the Corridor are invisible. Such statements are not borne out by the facts. There is one train a day between Berlin and Königsberg, the East Prussian capital, in each direction. When it reaches the Corridor the carriages are locked and its passengers may

continue across to East Prussia without obtaining Polish visas. Other trains cross the Corridor, it is true, but they are not "privileged" and the passengers are subjected to numerous and exasperating restrictions and delays.

Only the main east-and-west highways are now open for vehicular traffic, and this is hampered by every device that the ingenuity of the Poles can suggest. Here I speak from personal experience, for I have driven my car across the Corridor four times. It is stated that 144 improved highways and 722 country roads and foot-paths have been blocked, so that they end at the frontier in blind alleys. This wholesale severing of railways and highways, with the consequent interruption of traffic, cannot be justified on any legitimate grounds. It may serve to gratify Polish vindictiveness, but it has also brought about a state of industrial demoralization in the border districts which adversely affects Poles and Germans alike. The friction thus produced, evidenced by innumerable frontier incidents, may at any moment have the most disastrous consequences.

Though Poland controls the Vistula throughout virtually its entire length, by an irony peculiarly exasperating to the Poles it does not control its mouths. They are in the Free State of Danzig. This is regarded by the

Poles as an intolerable affront to their national dignity. Yet the mouth of Germany's great national river, the Rhine, is in Holland.

The disposal of Danzig was a source of the gravest embarrassment to the Peace Conference. Here, lying squarely athwart the mouth of Poland's national waterway and commanding the entrance to the Corridor, was a large and prosperous city, with a magnificent harbor, whose population was almost solidly German. What was to be done about it?

The majority of the territorial experts attached to the Conference advocated the annexation of the city to the new Polish state as the vestibule of the Corridor. (The Poles were not so modest; *they* demanded the whole of East Prussia.) President Wilson voted with Clemenceau that Danzig be handed over to Poland. Here again the American President displayed the amazing inconsistency which was one of the defects of his character. Though he had preached the policy of self-determination, he bluntly refused to let the Danzigers determine their own fate by plebiscite. He didn't dare. He knew that they would have voted almost solidly for restoration to the Fatherland. Lloyd George insisted, however, that Danzig remain in German possession. The wrangle was finally ended by the British premier consenting

to a compromise. Danzig was not to be retained by Germany nor was it to be given to Poland. It was to be created a free city under the protection of the League of Nations. Need it be said that this solution pleased no one and has settled nothing?

The Free State of Danzig consists of the city itself, the seaside town and summer resort of Zoppot, and three rural districts. It has a population of 390,000, of which 98½ per cent voted the German ticket at the last elections in 1927.

The state is “free” only in name, for the Polish government is responsible for the conduct of its foreign affairs, transit and customs; its harbor is under the control of a board half of whose members are Poles; and all disputes must be submitted to the League of Nations. The state is permitted no means of defense; on the land side it is wholly at the mercy of Poland. Poland has been permitted by the League to use the harbor of this supposedly neutral city for its war vessels and to establish a munitions base, guarded by Polish soldiery, within the city limits. Its railways are controlled by Poland. It cannot float a foreign loan without the consent of Poland. Officials of the Danzig government can communicate with Germany only through the Warsaw Foreign Office—and you can guess what that means.

Needless to say, such a tangled system of administration produces constant friction. The controversies, disputes, quarrels, appeals, hearings, discussions, conferences and settlements, and the prolonged negotiations incident to them, have occupied a considerable share of the time of the League of Nations.

At first the Poles made futile attempts at Polonization. But they have abandoned that policy, recognizing that Danzig is German and intends to remain German. Then they attempted economic penetration by establishing Polish banks and business houses, but the Danzigers boycotted them. As a consequence of all this the two peoples are engaged in constant dissension and recrimination. The Danzigers do not attempt to conceal their detestation and contempt for the Poles and the Poles leave nothing undone to humiliate the Danzigers. For it infuriates the Poles that Danzig does not belong to them. Had it not been under the protection of the League of Nations they would have seized it long ago.

One would have supposed that the port of Danzig would have answered all Poland's requirements for a long time to come, particularly as it is under Polish control and could be enlarged quite easily. But the Poles wanted a harbor all their own. Their choice of a site was limited, for the Corridor has a sea frontage of only

about forty-five miles, or double that if you include the narrow Hela Peninsula. The site finally chosen, called Gdynia, is far from ideal. It is in a bay eleven miles from Danzig and close to the western boundary of the Free State. There was no deep water, no natural protection from the sea, and the shore is ice-bound in winter. All the chief ports of the world have arisen at the mouths of rivers, but there is no river at Gdynia. In fact, there was no means of communication with the outside world, not even a railway.

But all that did not deter the Poles. With the aid of their French allies they raised the huge sum required to finance the project. They dredged a harbor and built a breakwater to protect it. In a space of little more than five years a brand-new port, all complete with wharves, dry-docks, warehouses and modern equipment has arisen amid the sand-dunes by the Baltic as at the wave of a magician's wand. A port must have a town, so one was built—an all-of-a-sudden city with broad boulevards lined by hotels, shops, banks, offices and residences. No mushroom city of the West ever sprang up with such amazing rapidity.

At an enormous expenditure Poland is now rushing to completion a direct railway through the Corridor to Gdynia. With its completion Polish products can be

transported over Polish rails to a Polish port to be loaded in Polish bottoms. The Poles feel, no doubt, that every rail they lay, every spike they drive, binds the Corridor more securely to Poland.

Of course the cost of all this has been stupendous. It would have staggered nations far more prosperous than Poland. As a patriotic gesture it is superb. As a business undertaking it is absurd. It is an artificial creation, utterly unjustified by the country's economic needs, pushed through in defiance of the country's financial condition, and it must be kept going by artificial means—low freight rates, nominal port dues, no coaling charges, enormous subsidies, and other inducements. Yet eleven miles away is a great port which is better in every respect than Gdynia can hope ever to become, with ample facilities for taking care of all the trade of Poland. The truth is, however, that Gdynia was built not because the facilities of Danzig were insufficient, but to compete with that port, to restrict its expansion. "If Danzig is to be denied us," the Poles say in effect, "then we will ruin it by diverting our trade to a port of our own." The danger is, however, that an enterprise run on such lines may end by ruining Poland.

If, when it was awarded to Poland, the Corridor contained something like an equal number of Poles and

Germans, its ethnological complexion has changed completely since then. Seven hundred thousand Germans have moved out—mainly as the result of pressure—and nearly a million Poles have moved in. Throughout Eastern Europe, in fact, Poles are replacing Germans because of a higher birth-rate and a lower standard of living.

“Give us ten years more and I have no fear,” Roman Dmowski, the Polish political leader, is quoted as saying. There you have the reason for the increasing insistence of Germany on treaty revision. She realizes that the tide of population is turning against her, and that unless she regains the disputed territories in the near future she will not regain them at all, save by force of arms, for they are being systematically and rapidly Polonized.

The Germans profess to believe that through the League of Nations, or by pressure of world opinion, or by some other means, intimidation perhaps, Poland can be persuaded or compelled to relinquish at least a portion of the Corridor. There was never a more groundless assumption. Poland will fight rather than yield an inch of territory. Make no mistake about that. She will fight even if France refuses to come to her aid. She will fight even if she knows that she is foredoomed to defeat. She will fight even though she realizes that, if victorious, she will be ruined.

If, on the other hand, Germany is denied a land road to East Prussia, she too will fight—but not for some time to come. Not until she is so firmly on her feet, militarily, industrially and financially, that there is little likelihood of her being overthrown. This may, and probably will, take years, but the Germans have inexhaustible patience. They are past-masters in waiting, planning, preparing. They will not start a war until they are ready down to the last suspender-button, but when they do start they will know exactly where they are going and it will not be easy to stop them.

In the event of a German attack Poland confidently looks to France for assistance. She may get it, and then again she may not. Barring some *casus belli* on the part of Poland, such as an invasion of East Prussia or the seizure of Danzig, Germany may be counted on to remain quiescent for a decade. And French policy may conceivably undergo a complete change before them. Even if the military alliance between France and Poland remains unbroken, you may be sure that Germany would not have to fight alone. It is as certain as anything can be in a world full of uncertainties that she could find a powerful ally in Russia.

What is the solution of this problem—the most perilous which confronts the world today? Frankly, I can

see none. Here are two proud and warlike peoples whose viewpoints are utterly irreconcilable. Poland regards the Corridor territory as a symbol of her national independence and is determined to hold it at any cost. Germany regards the dismemberment inflicted by the loss of the Corridor as a symbol of weakness and humiliation and is determined to recover it at any cost. There is justice on both sides; both peoples are equally sincere. Neither of them wants war, because both know that war means ruin, yet neither will compromise, much less back down. It is a case of two trains loaded with high explosive headed toward each other on the same track. Both are under way, both gathering momentum. Unless the engineers apply the brakes there must inevitably be a head-on collision. And that collision will produce an explosion which will shake the world.

## CHAPTER VI

### UPPER SILESIA

THE creation of the Corridor was the expression of a sincere and laudable desire on the part of the Allies to provide the new Polish state with an outlet to the sea. It may not have been the wisest solution of the exceedingly thorny problem—future events will probably show that it was a very unwise one—but, in view of all the circumstances, it had real justification.

The handing over to Poland of the greater part of Upper Silesia was, on the other hand, one of the most discreditable transactions of which European statesmen have ever been guilty. It was a settlement which flagrantly defied the wishes, as unmistakably expressed by plebiscite, of the majority of the inhabitants of the region. Its only justification was Poland's insatiable greed for territory and France's savage determination to smash Germany to atoms. The whole affair was smirched by arson, violence and murder, tainted with cowardice, chicanery and fraud. Incidentally, it almost precipitated a break-up of the Peace Conference.

Upper Silesia is a small, egg-shaped territory, slightly smaller than the State of Connecticut but with nearly double Connecticut's population, situated at the junction of the German, Polish and Czechoslovak frontiers on the northern slopes of the Carpathians. Its political importance lies in its enormous underground wealth, its coal fields being among the most extensive in Europe. These, with the deposits of iron ore and other minerals, make the region of immense value from the economic standpoint. This mineralogical basin was Germany's chief industrial outpost in the east; here were collieries and ore fields, zinc and lead mines, coke ovens, iron foundries, steel plants, chemical factories and metallurgical establishments of all kinds. It is perhaps the most highly concentrated industrial area on the continent, not excepting the Saar or the Ruhr.

In the very remote past, for about a century and a half, Upper Silesia had been Polish. The Germanization of the country began in the middle of the eleventh century and in 1335 Casimir, the Polish king, formally renounced all claim to it. For upwards of four hundred years Upper Silesia formed part of the Austrian Empire, but in 1745 Frederick the Great reunited it to the Prussian province of Silesia. The development of its natural resources and its industries was due wholly to Ger-

man brains, skill, science, capital and organizing genius.

Now, from the very outset of the Peace Conference the treaty-makers had adopted the axiom that Germany must be rendered permanently helpless by having her industrial teeth drawn. At this period, indeed, the French believed that when the proposed amputations of territory were effected post-war Germany would extend on the east only to the Oder and on the west only to the Rhine. The Saar formed her left molars and Upper Silesia her right, and these, according to French plans, were to be drawn. But, owing to British and American opposition, the French dream of a Rhine frontier had to be abandoned and the Saar was merely anesthetized for a period of fifteen years by placing it under the control of the League of Nations. Foiled in their designs on the west, the French dental surgeons turned their eyes toward the east and announced that Upper Silesia must be yanked out completely. Moreover, as the French and Polish representatives pointed out, this rich industrial area was just what Poland needed.

Ostensibly the justification for the transfer was at hand in the language statistics published in 1910 by the German government. These showed that of the 2,053,000 inhabitants of Upper Silesia, 1,169,000 spoke Polish. Could anything have been neater or more convincing?

Germany was condemned out of her own mouth. Moreover, these statistics fitted the Wilsonian doctrine of self-determination. In fact, they were on their face so convincing that President Wilson insisted that a plebiscite was quite unnecessary. In this view he was enthusiastically supported by the French.

But Lloyd George was not so easily convinced. Why, he argued, if the region was so incontestably Polish, should there be any opposition to the inhabitants themselves saying so by means of a plebiscite? At one period the argument became so heated that Lloyd George threatened to withdraw the British army from the continent. The persistency of the British premier eventually wore down the stubbornness of the American President and caused him reluctantly to agree to the application of his own formula.

In order to preserve order and to insure fairness at the polls it was decided that pending and during the plebiscite Upper Silesia should be occupied by Allied troops. These consisted at first of 8,000 French and 2,000 Italians, but later, when the situation became charged with peril, several British battalions were rushed in. To govern the occupied territory and to make arrangements for the plebiscite three commissioners were appointed. The chairman, General Le Rond, was

a Frenchman; General de Marinis represented Italy and Colonel Sir H. P. P. Percival was the British member of the commission. A majority of the personnel was French.

The Poles, who had so vociferously asserted that Upper Silesia was overwhelmingly Polish, were now becoming alarmed at the prospect of the question being definitely determined by plebiscite. They decided that the surest way of obtaining the coveted territory was to seize it by force of arms and then present the Supreme Council with a *fait accompli*. The scheme was engineered by a Polish political agitator named Adalbert Korfanty (he has since been committed to an insane asylum) who was abetted by the French chairman of the commission, General Le Rond.

Because the Polish government has adopted the policy of minimizing the gravity of the events which followed, or of denying them *in toto*, I shall let others than myself relate what happened. Four of those I shall quote are English; the fifth is a Frenchman. Two speak from "inside" knowledge, as it were, for they were members of the Plebiscite Commission. And all five are admittedly so well informed and of such unimpeachable reputation that the truthfulness of their statements is beyond question.

Sir Robert Donald, G.B.E., LL.D., formerly editor of *The Daily Chronicle* and an acknowledged authority on European politics, says in *The Polish Corridor and the Consequences*:

“General Le Rond . . . soon showed that he was more concerned with devising means by which the aims of France and the political ambitions of Poland would be attained, than to ensure a fair plebiscite. He and his friends encouraged the Poles in their resistance and in their insurrections. Without this encouragement it is safe to say that there would have been very little disturbance during the interregnum between the decision to hold the plebiscite and the date of voting, and none afterward. That interregnum of over a year was one of the blackest in the history of the Peace negotiations. . . .

“He [Lloyd George] decided to send six British battalions to Upper Silesia; they did not arrive until the beginning of June, by which time the insurgents had committed many outrages, acts of spoliation, and been guilty of much bloodshed. When order had been restored in the Territory a new phase in the fight for fixing the frontiers began, and was carried through in an atmosphere of prejudice, ill-feeling and suspicions. The outrages committed with the object of defeating

the plebiscite by terrorism and annexing Upper Silesia to Poland by revolution, have left ineradicable memories and colour the political situation today. The full record of these atrocities has not yet come to light, but the direct evidence which exists is overwhelming. Sir Harold Percival and Sir Harold Stuart, heads in turn of the British Commission, have testified to the outrages and the provocative circumstances surrounding them."

In *Silesia Revisited—1929*, Lieutenant-Colonel Graham Seton Hutchinson, D.S.O., M.C., F.R.G.S., who was a member of the Plebiscite Commission, says:

"The Poles immediately organized two revolts with the object of establishing a *coup d'état* in Upper Silesia. Both failed. The revolt in May, 1921, later, was of a more serious character. Those familiar with the situation came to the conclusion at the time, and their conclusions were supported by responsible members of the House of Commons, including the Prime Minister, that this serious revolt was carried out with the connivance of both the Polish and French Governments. . . . It was quite obvious, however, that the *coup d'état* had been arranged several months previously; and it was launched after the members of the Commission were generally aware as to the recommendations which would be made by the majority of the Commis-

sion, namely, the British and the Italian Commissioners. During this 'Putsch' a number of German officials and other citizens were subjected to violence and ill-treatment; the German inhabitants were terrorized; while the Italian soldiers who were left alone to uphold the authority of the Allies, lost some thirty men killed in action before they were finally driven back."

Said Major R. W. Clarke, Royal Engineers, British economic adviser on the Plebiscite Commission, in a paper read before the Royal Institute of International Affairs:

"Korfanty, that sinister and unscrupulous apostle of Polish annexation, who was directly responsible for the murder of hundreds of Germans, was in close touch with the French President and was protected by the French. The two Polish insurrections which were directed against the Commission were not suppressed, although if the French troops had done their duty instead of remaining neutral the insurrection would not have lasted more than a few days. German officials were maltreated, murdered, and driven away from their work."

In the Encyclopaedia Britannica (13th Edition) we have the testimony of Arnold Joseph Toynbee, a celebrated authority on international affairs, Professor of

International History at the University of London, a member of the British Delegation to the Peace Conference and a member of the Upper Silesian Plebiscite Commission. Professor Toynbee says:

“Both the Poles [under Korfanty] and the Germans opened an active canvassing campaign; and under Polish pressure the Germans in the southern and eastern districts were subjected to oppressive treatment. On August 19, 1920, the Poles made an attempt to seize the country by force. Bands, chiefly recruited from Congress Poland, usurped authority. A number of Germans were forcibly carried into Poland, and many were killed. Order was not restored for several weeks. In January, 1921, the date of the plebiscite was fixed for March 20, 1921. The Polish terrorism immediately revived, especially in the districts of Rybnik, Pless, Katowitz and Beuthen.

“It reached its climax in the days preceding the plebiscite. Voters from other parts of the German Reich were frequently refused admission to the polls; sometimes they were maltreated or even murdered; and houses where outvoters were staying were set on fire. The day of the plebiscite passed, however, without disturbance except at a few places, such as Rybnik and Pless, but on the following day the Polish excesses re-

commenced. The poll showed 717,122 votes for Germany and 483,514 for Poland. . . . The French representative, Le Rond, who had from the first been accused of tacitly supporting the Poles, wished to allot the whole of southern and eastern Upper Silesia to them, while the British and Italian representatives wished to apportion the industrial region to Germany. Protracted diplomatic negotiations between Paris, London and Rome led to no result. At the end of April a report became current that the Council of Ambassadors had given only the districts of Rybnik and Pless to Poland.

“In consequence of this rumor the first days of May witnessed a new and more serious Polish insurrection. Korfanty had secretly raised a well-organized Polish force which received arms and reinforcements from Poland. . . . He nominated himself dictator of the districts under Polish occupation, took over the administration, and treated even the Allied officials with such scant consideration that they were obliged to withdraw to Opeln and the regions not occupied by the Poles. . . . Attempts by the Inter-Allied Commission to put an end to the insurrection by negotiations with Korfanty having failed, the Allies despatched reinforcements of French and British troops to Upper Silesia. . . . As a result of difficulties in paying and provision-

ing his followers Korfanty now lost control over them. Independent bands plundered the villages, illtreated the Germans, and murdered many of them. In the industrial districts work in many of the mines and iron works came to a standstill. By the end of June the loss suffered by the industrial region was estimated at three milliards of marks."

And finally, in *The Eastern Frontiers of Germany*, by M. René Martel, Agrégé de l'Université, we have the testimony of a Frenchman:

"On April 4, 1919, the Polish Supreme National Council of Upper Silesia got into touch with Korfanty. Adalbert Korfanty, a former journalist and a popular leader, was the man of action for whom Dmowski was looking to prepare and organize the rising. . . . On May 1, 1919, the Polish secret societies took stock of themselves. They went into the streets, formed into processions and demonstrated their patriotic sentiments by pursuing the Germans. The Terror had begun.

"The decision of the Council of Four was destined to hasten the preparation of the *coup de main*. A Polish High Command, a veritable revolutionary General Staff, composed of 243 officers and non-commissioned officers, took up its position at Sosnowice, three kilometres from the German frontier. . . . The District

Commandants met every fortnight at Beuthen. Their work was to compile 'black lists' for the elimination, at the right time, of the most active German elements and to prepare a plan for the occupation of all industrial establishments.

"The secret organizations which he [Korfanty] had built up nevertheless continued to exist until the plebiscite. Their activities, as one may well imagine, did not lessen as the decisive day approached. The authorities in charge of the occupation closed their eyes to acts of terrorism, but since then very complete records of them have been drawn up. Acts of violence and outrages of all kinds against the life and property of German subjects were especially numerous, before the plebiscite, in the regions where a Polish majority was recorded on the day of the poll. It is not necessary to insist further upon these painful details.

"On May 2nd a strike was begun by the Polish miners, who immediately came into conflict with their German fellow-workers. Disturbances broke out everywhere, and reinforcements from Poland occupied all important points. . . . The French troops of occupation remained passive; the one company which was stationed in Beuthen, where the rising was to have broken out, was withdrawn, and General Le Rond, having

found it necessary, a few days before the decisive events, to go on an urgent official journey, disappeared from the scene. On the other hand the small detachments of Italian troops which were distributed over the invaded area put up a brave resistance, and only withdrew after having suffered heavy losses, over thirty being killed. Within twenty-four hours the insurrection had triumphed.

“Meanwhile, an appalling reign of terror was in existence. Murders increased in numbers; the Germans were tortured, mutilated, put to death and the corpses defiled; villages and chateaux were pillaged, burnt or blown up. The German Government has published on the subject a series of White Papers, illustrated by photographs, which the reader of fine sensibilities would do well not to open. The scenes which have thus been perpetuated pictorially surpass in horror the worst imaginable atrocities.”

*These words were written, remember, not by a German, but by a Frenchman!*

The final report of the Plebiscite Commission, as signed by the three commissioners, gives “votes for Germany, 707,605; votes for Poland, 479,359; being 59.6 for Germany and 40.4 for Poland.”

One could not ask for a more clear-cut or convincing expression of the sentiments of the population. In spite of this the French insisted that the greater part of the industrial region of Upper Silesia should be assigned to Poland. To them the wishes of the inhabitants, the pledges implied by the granting of the plebiscite, meant nothing. Great Britain, on the other hand, maintained that such a partition would be grossly unfair to Germany by violating the Treaty of Versailles, and to this view Italy and Japan adhered, leaving France in a minority of one. After prolonged debates, marked by constant dissensions, the Supreme Council, unable to reach an agreement, "passed the buck" to the League of Nations. That body entrusted the solution of the problem to a commission composed of representatives of Japan, China, Belgium, Brazil and Spain. Four of these five nations, it may be noted in passing, had recently been in a state of war with Germany, and one of them, Belgium, was to all intents and purposes a French vassal, ready to do France's bidding.

In view of the un-neutral composition of the commission, and France's dominating influence in the League, the decision was not surprising. By it an area containing at least three-fourths of the aggregate mineral wealth of the territory, with a population of approximately

1,125,000, was awarded to Poland. To Poland was allotted 77 per cent of the total coal production; 82.4 per cent of the lead production; all the zinc and lead works; five out of eight iron works, with 21 out of 37 blast furnaces and 67 per cent of the production; nine out of fourteen rolling-mills with 72 per cent of the production of semi-manufactured and 84 per cent of manufactured goods; 15 out of 25 iron and steel foundries; and the entire chemical industry of the region.<sup>1</sup>

No one, so far as I am aware, has ever attempted to defend that decision. Indeed, it is indefensible. It convinced not only the Germans but all fair-minded men that the professions of good faith and the promises of fair play made by the Allies were not worth the paper they were written on. That the justice to which even a defeated enemy is entitled was to be subordinated to greed, vindictiveness, violence and terrorism. That Poland and France would stop at nothing in order to gain their ends. And that the League of Nations, so unctuously proclaimed by its supporters as standing for the Square Deal, would support them.

Aside from its injustice, the fixation of the frontier, by arbitrarily dividing a district which had always been an economic unit, has worked innumerable inconven-

<sup>1</sup> *The Polish Corridor and the Consequences*, by Sir Robert Donald.

iences and hardships on the population. In many cases the line was run directly through the properties of particular establishments, so that today one frequently finds the shaft of a coal mine in one country and the workings in another; smelters on one side of the border and refineries on the other; steel plants cut off from their sources of electric power and from their administrative offices. The network of narrow-gauge railways which served the district have been severed in seventeen places. In one case a town was deprived of its waterworks and had to find a new water supply elsewhere. In another the frontier was bent outward for the sole purpose of giving to Poland a particularly well equipped German hospital. Small Polish salients have been driven between towns which are still German, and the street-cars affording communication between these towns are permitted to cross the few yards of Polish territory only with locked doors and without stopping. Though the tortuous boundary line is only 222 miles in length, there are fifty-two customs houses along it, to say nothing of other customs barriers beneath the surface of the ground where the frontier crosses the coal workings. These vexations are systematically intensified, moreover, by the pettiness, vindictiveness and arrogance of the Polish authorities, who every now and then

tighten the screws on one pretext or another, reducing the hours for crossing the line, arbitrarily closing highways, and not infrequently subjecting street-car passengers to personal search almost in public. The whole policy of the Polish officials, indeed, is to bedevil and humiliate the Germans.

“Harder to bear than the material loss,” remarks Sir Robert Donald, “were the exasperating and cruel moral wrongs and injustices inflicted upon the German community. It is possible enough that had the Allies transferred Upper Silesia to Poland, basing their action upon no other law than brute force, Germany would have resigned herself to the inevitable, according to historic precedent in ages when only might determined the fate of people. She would have known in her heart of hearts that she was getting the same treatment that victors in the past inflicted on their victims. But to inflict upon her the tragic farce of the plebiscite, with all its accompaniments of deceit, broken pledges, massacres, cruel outrages, carried out in an atmosphere of political putrescence, was to add insult to injury, moral torture to robbery under arms.”

Though economic conditions in Upper Silesia have improved materially during the past decade, the same cannot be said of the political situation. The highly dis-

turbed condition of that region, the unbroken series of disputes, broils, excesses and frontier incidents which have made Upper Silesia the outstanding danger-spot in Europe, are due to Poland's policy of ruthless de-germanization. The German inhabitants have three alternatives: to accept Polonization, to leave the country, or to live under a reign of terror.

The attempts at Polonization have taken many forms. Agitations are carried on against the German clergy, particularly the Protestants, whom the Poles regard as heretics. German religious institutions, including schools and hospitals, have been liquidated. Many Germans have been prevented from following their chosen professions by the imposition of unfair occupational restrictions. In numerous cases German physicians have been deprived of their licenses and compelled to abandon their practices. Great numbers of Germans, usually business and professional men, have been deported. The managers of large industrial plants have been ordered to leave the country and their places have been filled with Poles.

The Minority Treaties, as well as the Convention signed by the Poles when they were awarded Upper Silesia, guarantee that the minorities shall have adequate schools conducted in their respective languages,

but the Poles have left nothing undone to nullify this pledge. In many cases German school-teachers have been summarily dismissed and the schools have been forced to employ Polish teachers with an imperfect knowledge of the German language. Parents refusing to send their children to Polish schools have been prosecuted and fined. (It might be explained, in passing, that the reason why large numbers of Polish-speaking parents have refused to send their children to Polish schools is because the German schools are more efficient.) Cases are recorded where discrimination has been practiced even in the matter of transporting school-children. One would suppose that where children are concerned the Poles would stop at terrorism, yet notices have been issued that children sent to German schools "will find difficulty in earning a living in Poland."

By electoral disqualifications of one sort and another great numbers of German voters have been prevented from casting their ballots, it having been estimated that in the elections of 1930 the names of some 45,000 Germans were scratched from the voting register by the Polish officials. Secret societies, operating with the full cognizance and tacit approval of Warsaw, instituted a reign of terror in Upper Silesia, intimidating the German voters and frequently maltreating them. The truth

is that the Warsaw government is working for one end: the complete elimination of the German element in Poland.

By 1930 the situation had become so intolerable that the German government lodged a strong protest with the League of Nations. (It had lodged similar protests before and the League's findings had been against Poland, whereupon the Polish government refused to accept them.) But this time Germany was stronger and more determined. The arguments were heard at Geneva in January, 1931. In support of the protest the German chancellor presented a mass of convincing testimony, quoting chapter and verse. The Polish premier replied that the abuses complained of had been greatly magnified, though he reluctantly admitted that perhaps certain Polish officials and secret societies might have been a trifle overzealous. The League disposed of the matter by administering a sharp rebuke to Poland. She was admonished that the abuses and excesses to which the Germans were subjected should cease and that the Warsaw government should no longer sanction the activities of the secret societies in Upper Silesia. Poland, realizing that world opinion was arrayed against her, sullenly agreed to behave better in the future. It was reported in the press that private assurances had been

given to the League that Graczynski, the governor of Polish Upper Silesia, would be removed, although a friend of the Polish dictator, Marshal Pilsudski.

“But the teacher didn’t dast lick me,” the school bully triumphantly assured his friends. “She was afraid o’ me, I reckon. She jes’ gave me a talking-to an’ asked me to promise I’d be a good little boy. *Har-har!* I told her I would, ’cause I didn’t want to be expelled with the school picnic coming on.”

How they must have snickered in Warsaw!

## CHAPTER VII

### EASTERN GALICIA

LIKE the Russia of the tsars, Poland is an imperialist state whose conquests have not been made overseas but by the expansion of her own boundaries at the expense of neighboring nations. She has her colonies at home. Under Polish rule there are, according to the latest available statistics, 72,750 Lithuanians, 1,135,000 Russians, 1,550,000 Germans, 2,520,000 Jews, and 4,220,000 Ukrainians, or, as they are frequently called, Ruthenes. In other words, approximately 30 per cent of the total population of the new state consists of alien elements, most of whom are bitterly antagonistic to Polish rule. Therein lies Poland's greatest weakness.

By far the largest of these alien colonies is, as I have shown, the Ukrainian. But perhaps you were unaware that there were any Ukrainians in Poland. That is not at all surprising, for they have never met with much success in their attempts to gain public attention and sympathy and the Poles are careful not to let the limelight of

publicity fall upon them. But they are there, just the same, a solid block, nearly four and a quarter million strong, on the southern and eastern frontiers of Poland—and the Poles are at their wits' ends to know what to do with them. In the case of the Ukrainians Poland, to put it vulgarly, has bitten off more than she can assimilate.

Ukrainian—which means “of the frontier”—is the name of that branch of the Slav race, more than twenty-five million strong, which occupies the steppes of southern Russia and the Carpathian plateau. Variously known as Little Russians, Carpato-Russians, Ruthenians, Galicians, Bukovinians, they call themselves Ukrainians, no matter where they reside. The bulk of the nation is found in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, which roughly corresponds to Little Russia, but there are over four millions of them in Polish Galicia and large numbers in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and even in the Caucasus. Though there are certain minor differences between the Russian and non-Russian Ukrainians, they speak the same language, belong to the same Uniate faith, and dream of the day when they will be brought together in a great Ukrainian state extending from the banks of the Dnieper to the borders of Hungary.

Though the Poles attempt to deny the existence of a Ukrainian nation, the fact remains that the Ukrainians

occupy a well-defined, compactly inhabited national territory, and have a highly developed national consciousness, a language, a literature and a church of their own. Not only that, but as a race they actually outnumber the Poles. But, while the claims of the Poles to autonomy were universally recognized and lavishly rewarded, those of their Ukrainian neighbors were ignored or forgotten.

No sooner had the independence of the Poles been recognized than they cast acquisitive eyes on the former Austrian provinces of Western and Eastern Galicia, which they coveted because of the immense value of their oil fields, and in October, 1918, they laid claim to both provinces, lock, stock and barrel. The aristocracy of both provinces is Polish, while the middle class is Jewish or German, but in Eastern Galicia the Ukrainians are in an overwhelming majority, in certain districts forming nearly eighty per cent of the population. It is not surprising, therefore, that they looked on Eastern Galicia as their own and replied that they would rather "fight and die" than let themselves be annexed by Poland.

At a conference held by the Ukrainian leaders at Lemberg it was determined to found an independent Ukrainian state and to carry this resolution into effect a National Council was organized. The Council thereupon occupied the government buildings in Lemberg

(for Austria was in a state of chaos) and assumed control of the government of Eastern Galicia within its ethnographical limits. The Polish minority insisted, however, that the territory should be annexed to Poland; Polish troops invaded Galicia and occupied Lemberg; and fighting between the Ukrainians and the Poles began.

Things were going none too well for the Ukrainians when, at the beginning of 1919, the Hetman Petlura, who had made himself master of the Russian Ukraine, intervened, proclaiming the union of the Ukraine and Eastern Galicia in a republic. The Ukrainian Junta in Lemberg agreed to the union, for, as I have remarked, the Ukrainians of Galicia and Russia are one and the same race, and the Ukrainian troops joined Petlura's army.

Throughout 1919 fighting continued, Polish troops overrunning Eastern Galicia in defiance of orders from the Peace Conference in Paris to effect a truce in order that the problem might be settled by negotiation. In May the Supreme Council assigned Western Galicia to Poland. In June it announced that Eastern Galicia would be permitted to decide its own future by plebiscite. But the pledge contained a joker clause which authorized Poland to proceed with her military occu-

pation of the district. Still, being a naïve and credulous people, the Ukrainians believed that the Allies, in pledging them self-determination, were acting in good faith, so they broke away from their cousins of the Russian Ukraine in the belief that they were to be permitted to found a state of their own.

But in December, 1919, the Allies, ignoring the promise they had made, announced that Eastern Galicia would be granted autonomy for twenty-five years under a Polish protectorate, after which period the country's future would be decided by the League of Nations. This extraordinary decision naturally evoked vehement protests from the Ukrainians, who felt, and quite justifiably, that they had been "let down." It also precipitated a governmental crisis in Poland and resulted in the fall of the Polish premier, Paderewski, for the Poles, who had demanded and confidently expected unconditional possession of Eastern Galicia, were infuriated by the protectorate solution.

The Ukrainian government was now in a helpless position. It was constantly on the move, driven here and there by Polish soldiery. It was ignored by the Allies, who were too busy mollifying Poland to pay heed to the appeals of an obscure people like the Ukrainians. Its funds were running low and it was short of munitions.

And now even their Ukrainian ally, Petlura, went back on the Ukrainians, abandoning his claims to Eastern Galicia in return for the recognition by Poland of his administration in the Russian Ukraine, which had gone completely Bolshevik.

Meanwhile the Poles treated the region as their own. In the autumn of 1922 they held elections to the Polish Diet—although practically the whole Ukrainian population refrained from voting—and even drafted Ukrainians into the Polish army. They conducted themselves as conquerors, imposing upon the Ukrainian population a rule of iron. In the spring of 1923 the Council of Ambassadors accepted the *fait accompli*, just as the League of Nations had already accepted it in the cases of Upper Silesia and Vilna, by recognizing Poland's claim to out-and-out possession of Eastern Galicia.

Many of the nationalist leaders fled across the frontier and sought the protection of their kinsmen in the Russian Ukraine. The great majority of these were not permitted by the Poles to return to their homes. A small minority made the best of the situation. In order to pacify the newly acquired territory, where feeling ran very high, and to make at least a pretense of giving the inhabitants the autonomy which had been promised them, the Polish Diet passed a law establishing in Eastern Galicia

a local administration composed of two chambers, one to be composed of Ukrainians. This was described as "autonomy" and has been brought forward repeatedly as an example of Poland's generosity toward her minorities. It may be said, however, that Polish policy in general has not been characterized by any excessive solicitude for the Ukrainians.

The Ukrainians are far from being the hopelessly backward people which Polish propagandists have painted them. On the contrary, they have much in common with the people of the Irish Free State. It is an interesting fact, by the way, that the two countries, Ireland and Galicia, are of approximately the same size and that the population of the one is approximately the same as the Ukrainian population of the other. Both are agricultural peoples, both are visionaries, and both are devoutly religious. Like the Irish, too, the Ukrainians are poor and largely illiterate, but not even in the Emerald Isle does one find more formidable fighting qualities or a more passionate national sentiment.

The Ukrainians have great constructive ability and their own unique civilization. They have developed a co-operative system which is one of the most successful of its kind. They have their own savings banks, libraries

and schools; their own agricultural laboratory in Lemberg (or Lwow, as it is now called); their own art, literature and folk-songs; a language of their own. Generally speaking, the house of the Ukrainian peasant, poor as it may be, is better built and cleaner than that of his Polish neighbor; his little farm is usually better run.

The Ukrainian schools are subjected to exactly the same handicaps as those of the Germans in Upper Silesia. Here, also, the Poles are using the school-children as pawns in their attempt to Polonize the region. The social, educational and literary clubs of the Ukrainians, their *hespoda*—itinerant teachers who travel about the country giving instruction in agriculture and dairy farming—are all regarded by the Poles with the greatest suspicion. Their political meetings are attended by Polish soldiers who arrest the speakers and disperse the assemblages on the slightest provocation. Their press is heavily censored, so that the editorial page of a Ukrainian newspaper frequently consists mainly of blank space. Indeed, the situation of the Ukrainians in Poland in many respects resembles that of the Irish before they obtained home rule, with the same repressive measures in force everywhere, with the Polish

soldiery and police guilty of the same excesses as the “Black and Tans,” with the same prevailing atmosphere of hatred and suspicion.

There seems to be little doubt that the “pacification” of Eastern Galicia by the Poles was conducted with a brutality bordering on barbarism. I have seen the official report issued by the Ukrainian National Committee—it bears the fitting title of *The Bloody Book*—which contains a long list of crimes and outrages committed by the Poles against the Ukrainian population of Galicia. Instances of arson, flogging, torture, murder, rape are recounted in horrifying detail and supported by the sworn statements of the victims. The Poles assert that these charges are without foundation. That is difficult to believe. There are too many of them and the evidence is too convincing. But if only ten per cent of them are true the government at Warsaw should hang its head in shame.

In June, 1930, there appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, one of the most reputable and least sensational newspapers in England, a series of articles entitled *A Tour in Poland*. In commenting on conditions in Eastern Galicia the English author says:

“The pressure exercised by the Poles is always there. It is not always immediately apparent, but at times it is

terroristic. Arrests on the barest suspicion, imprisonment while awaiting trial that may not come off for a year or two, and ill-treatment in prisons are amongst the commonplaces of Ukrainian life under Polish rule.

“A prominent member of the Ukrainian movement was released about six months ago after being in prison for four years. He was so beaten by his gaolers that two of his ribs were fractured. ‘We can stand even this sort of thing if we must,’ he said to me, ‘but what we cannot stand is when the women prisoners are beaten.’”

The unhappy plight of the Ukrainians is primarily due to bad faith on the part of the Allies and the weakness of the League of Nations. Consider the facts.

Shortly after the war, in June, 1919, the Allies, in order to pacify the war-wrecked and distracted region, promised the people of Eastern Galicia that they would be permitted to settle their own future by plebiscite in accordance with the Wilsonian doctrine of self-determination. Was that promise kept? No. For in December of the same year the Allies, under pressure from Poland and France, announced that they had changed their minds and that for a period of twenty-five years Eastern Galicia was to be a Polish protectorate, after which its fate would be decided by the League of Nations. Was *that* promise kept? No. For in 1923 the Allies,

yielding once more to Franco-Polish pressure, announced that they had again changed their minds and that Eastern Galicia was to be given outright to Poland. The Ukrainians were assured, however, that their rights as a minority would be guaranteed by Poland and by the League. Has *that* promise been kept? On the contrary, the clauses of the minority treaty have been grossly violated by Poland and the League has declined even to consider the protests of the Ukrainians.

The Poles seek to justify the harshness of the measures they have employed in Eastern Galicia by asserting that the Ukrainians are disloyal to the Polish state, that they are constantly intriguing with their brethren in the Russian Ukraine, and that they are only awaiting an opportunity to break away from Poland and join the Soviet Union. The Ukrainians probably are disloyal to Poland. It would be surprising if they were not, for they detest the Poles and bitterly resent the treatment they have received from them. They probably do carry on intrigues with the Russian Ukrainians, though, from all I can learn, they are not at all communistically inclined and have not the slightest sympathy with Bolshevism.

Conditions being as they are, it is doubtless true that it is necessary to rule them with a strong hand, for they are a source of real anxiety to the Warsaw government.

But that is no excuse for burning their homes, closing their churches, torturing their men, flogging their women. It must be remembered, however, that the Poles do not regard such methods with the same horror and indignation that we do. They are Slavs, with all of the Slav arrogance and hot-headedness, and become infuriated by the slightest opposition.

It is extremely unlikely that anything will be done through outside influence to right the wrongs of the Ukrainians, for Galicia is far away—the average American has only the haziest idea where it is located; the voice of the Ukrainians is feeble; the League of Nations will continue to listen to the Poles and their French allies; and the world at large is preoccupied with troubles of its own.

It seems to me, however, that self-interest should eventually cause the Poles to adopt a conciliatory attitude toward the Ukrainians. After all, there are upwards of four millions of them, settled in a compact mass on Poland's eastern frontier in a region of immense strategic importance. And just across that frontier, in the Russian Ukraine, are twenty million more. Heretofore, as I have said, the Ukrainians of Galicia have had no sympathy with Communism, but in case the Soviets should launch an attack against Poland it would be surprising if they

did not side with the Reds. Certainly they could be no worse off under the rule of Moscow than they are under that of Warsaw. Yet this danger could, I believe, be averted, and the loyalty of the Ukrainians assured, were Poland to adopt toward them a policy of justice, generosity and conciliation. But that, I fear, is too much to expect of the Poles. They believe that the only way to handle subject peoples is with the iron hand.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LITHUANIA

WE now come to the fourth of Poland's frontier problems—the open break with the neighboring republic of Lithuania occasioned by the Polish seizure of the Vilna territory. Poland, it will be seen, has a distinct *penchant* for taking by force anything she covets and cannot obtain by peaceful means. And, with the support of her ally, France, she has thus far gotten away with these robberies. Curious, is it not, how the world condemns in the case of an individual what it condones in the case of a nation? Were an individual to adopt Poland's policy of taking what he wanted by violence he would go to prison.

Imagine the head of an axe driven up to its helve into the Baltic shore between East Prussia and Latvia, with its blade resting against Poland, and you will have as good a picture as I can draw for you of Lithuania. In area the country is about the size of the State of Maine, but with thrice Maine's population.

Polish propaganda has led the world to believe that the Lithuanians are Slavs, but such is not the case. They

came originally from the Balkan peninsula, or, as is more likely, they halted there for a time in the course of their northward migration from the cradle of the race in Asia Minor. In the dim dawn of European history—probably in the sixth century—these warrior tribes out of the South reached the Baltic shore and settled in the region of swamps and forests lying between the Niemen and the Dvina.

For several centuries their history consisted of a series of bloody struggles against the invasions of predatory Muscovite boyars from the east and of the Teutonic crusading orders from the south. They had nothing in the nature of an organized government, however, until early in the fourteenth century, where Gediminas, who is regarded as the founder of Lithuania, made himself king and established his capital at Vilna.

Under his son, Algirdas, Lithuania became a mighty empire, stretching right across Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea and eastward to the gates of Moscow. In point of territory it was three times the size of its neighbor, Poland. But this was altered by the political astuteness of the Poles, who in 1385 offered the hand of their beautiful fifteen-year-old queen, Jadwiga, to the Lithuanian ruler, Jagiello, on condition that the two countries should be united. Jagiello accepted the conditions, mar-



#### UNAFRAID OF THE POLISH GIANT

Professor A. Voldemaras, Foreign Minister of Lithuania, whose refusal to accede to the seizure of Vilna has infuriated Poland

ried Jadviga, and assumed the crown of the dual monarchy, though it was agreed that each party to the union should retain its name, laws, administration, treasury and army.

The Lithuanians, however, bitterly resented Jagiello's attempt to compromise the independence of his country by his marriage to the Polish queen. Thenceforward his influence in Lithuania's affairs was negligible, the entire control of the country passing into the hands of his cousin, Vytautas, who is regarded by the Lithuanians as their greatest ruler. Though during his reign Lithuania waxed in power and prosperity, he was unable to stem the tide of Polish influence. It took the Poles nearly two hundred years to achieve their aims, but the "personal union" of Jagiello and Jadviga in 1385 crystallized in 1569 in the so-called Lublin Union. From then on Lithuania and Poland had not only a common ruler, but a common parliament and a common foreign policy, and, as things turned out, they were involved in a common ruin. For in the three partitions to which the dual state was subjected in 1772, 1792 and 1795 by Russia, Prussia and Austria, Lithuania was apportioned between the first two, with the River Niemen as the dividing line.

Lithuania remained subject to Russia from 1795 until 1915, when the German armies occupied the country.

This was the darkest period in Lithuanian history. Even the name Lithuania disappeared from the map of the world, the term “North-West Provinces” being substituted by the Russians. Two attempts at rebellion in conjunction with the Poles, in 1831 and 1863, were suppressed with ruthless brutality. The Lithuanian schools were closed and in 1864 an edict was issued prohibiting the printing of books or newspapers in the Lithuanian language. Russian gendarmes posted at the doors of the churches even seized the Lithuanian prayer-books carried by the worshipers. Yet, despite the reign of terror thus instituted, the Russians were unable to suppress the Lithuanian language, or to destroy the national consciousness of the people, for books, pamphlets and papers printed in Prussian Lithuania (East Prussia) were smuggled across the border and circulated among the people.

The ardent nationalism thus fostered and kept alive was fanned afresh by the revolutionary movement which swept Russia after her defeat by Japan in 1905. A national congress was held at Vilna, attended by two thousand delegates who demanded from the tsar’s government the reconstitution of Lithuania within her ethnographic frontiers, with her capital at Vilna, and a large measure of autonomy. The Russian government assented to these demands, though with no real intention

of abiding by its promises, for the policy of repression, which had momentarily slackened, was soon resumed and the use of the Lithuanian language was again forbidden. But the national movement, having gained so much headway, could no longer be suppressed, and the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 furnished the Lithuanian leaders with the opportunity for which they had long been waiting.

Lying between Russia and Germany, Lithuania soon found herself a battleground for the contending armies. Indeed, no country suffered more severely or made greater sacrifices in proportion to area and population. Fortresses of the first class, like Kovno and Grodno, served as targets for the sledge-hammer blows of the Germans and as centers for the Russian defense. The Russian commanders, compelled to retreat before the German onslaught, ordered the destruction of everything they could not carry away with them and the evacuation of all Lithuanian men of military age into the interior of Russia. The whole country was systematically devastated by the retiring Russians. So great was the destruction of houses that large numbers of the inhabitants had to seek refuge in abandoned trenches. The dispersion of families rendered thousands of children homeless.

But the advancing Germans matched the Russians in

ruthlessness. The country was bled white. The forests were felled wholesale and the timber shipped to Germany. A quarter of a million tons of grain and fodder, upwards of a million head of livestock, were requisitioned. Nearly half of all the farms in the country were completely ruined. The unhappy country became to all intents and purposes a German province when, by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Germany forced Russia to abandon all claims to Lithuania.

Failing in an attempt to induce the Lithuanian leaders to assent to the annexation of the country by Germany, the German military authorities gave permission for the convening of the Taryba, or National Council, at Vilna. On February 16, 1918, the Taryba formally proclaimed the independence of Lithuania. But, owing to the intrigues of the pan-Germans, the independence thus proclaimed remained purely nominal until the sudden collapse of Germany in the following November. On the same day that the Armistice was signed in Marshal Foch's car in the far-away forest of Compiègne, the members of the Lithuanian Taryba, realizing that the long-awaited day of freedom had dawned at last, assembled in Vilna and organized a provisional, non-partisan government under the premiership of Professor Augustinas Voldemaras, a distinguished scholar and

educator who, it is said, can converse fluently in fifteen languages. Five months later Antanas Smetona, a writer and publicist whose political and patriotic services had been of immense value to his country, was elected the first President of Lithuania.

Things were going well with the new little state when, in January, 1919, the Bolsheviks launched their great offensive. The rapid approach of the Red wave of invasion caused the Lithuanian government hastily to withdraw from Vilna to Kovno. The Bolshevik advance reached its high tide in May, 1919, when Kovno itself was threatened. Meanwhile the Poles also had attacked the Bolsheviks and in April drove them out of Vilna and established themselves there.

In December, 1919, the Peace Conference in Paris laid down a provisional eastern frontier for Poland, the so-called "Curzon Line," which assigned to the Poles most territories where the Polish element was in a majority, but excluded mixed and doubtful districts, including the city and province of Vilna, which was assigned to Lithuania.

The Polish government proposed to the Lithuanian government joint action against the Bolsheviks, but the latter refused to coöperate until the Poles had recognized Lithuania as an independent state and Vilna as

its capital. The consequence was that the Poles embarked upon large-scale military operations against Soviet Russia single-handed. Their invasion of the Ukraine in April, 1920, was successful, but the Red counter-offensive in July drove the Poles back almost to the gates of Warsaw.

The Lithuanians took advantage of the situation and reoccupied Vilna, but shortly afterward the approach of a Red army caused them hastily to evacuate the town, their forces being too weak to offer a successful resistance. This laid them open to the reproach that they were not able to hold what they had claimed as their ancient capital. The Poles accused the Lithuanians of surrendering an important railhead and strategic center, thereby exposing the left flank of the hard-pressed Polish army. But, as it happened, the face of the war changed almost overnight, and the Poles, stiffened by the arrival of a French military mission under General Weygand, turned on the Bolsheviks, defeated them, and drove them back into Russia. Whereupon, the Red menace having disappeared, the Lithuanians once more took possession of their capital.

The state of war with Russia was concluded by a treaty of peace signed at Moscow, under the terms of which Lithuania's claim to Vilna and Grodno was rec-

ognized by the Bolsheviks. But the Poles refused to recognize it and lodged a protest with the League of Nations. This was followed by an agreement between the Polish and Lithuanian governments to refrain from hostilities and to respect the boundary between the two countries as fixed by an inter-Allied commission, by whose decision Vilna was again placed on the Lithuanian side of the line.<sup>1</sup>

This commission was composed of officers from France, Italy, England, Spain and Japan, with a French chairman. On October 7, 1920, they fixed the frontier, established a neutral zone, and representatives of Poland and Lithuania signed what is known as the Suwalki Agreement.

But two days later, October 9, a Polish military adventurer, General Zeligovski, at the head of a Polish army, crossed the line and ordered the Lithuanians out of Vilna. The commission of the League of Nations was still in the city, but at the suggestion of its French chairman—who was in sympathy with the Poles—its members, with the power of five great nations and the League behind them, withdrew to Warsaw, whence they went to Brussels, and never returned. The Lithuanian

<sup>1</sup> See article, "Lithuania," by William Lewis Blennerhasset in the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

garrison being hopelessly outnumbered, the Polish filibusters occupied the city and the greater part of the province.

Says Sir Robert Donald, in commenting on this performance:

“The enormity of the outrage committed by General Zeligovski, who declared that he was acting entirely on his own initiative, unknown to the Polish Government or the heads of the army, is all the worse when, as was soon discovered, the raid had been planned by Marshal Pilsudski, then President of Poland.<sup>1</sup> Later on Mr. Padrewski informed the Supreme Council that his Government disavowed the deed and condemned General Zeligovski. The ink on the treaty which Poland signed by the hand of Pilsudski was not dry when the conspiracy to raid the town and province was hatched.”

The League of Nations made a number of fruitless attempts to secure a just and satisfactory settlement not based on force, and, incidentally, to reassert its own authority, which had been flouted by Zeligovski’s action. The first abortive scheme was the taking of a plebiscite under the protection of an international force, but this was abandoned in favor of direct negotiations between

<sup>1</sup> The then Italian Minister to Poland states in his memoirs that Marshal Pilsudski boasted to a group of foreign diplomats that he had himself planned the seizure of Vilna by Zeligovski.

Lithuania and Poland, it being proposed by M. Hymans, of Belgium, that Vilna be incorporated in Lithuania as an autonomous canton, provided Lithuania would agree to a permanent military and economic alliance with Poland. These proposals came to nothing, however, for Lithuania argued that her claim to Vilna had twice been solemnly acknowledged by Poland and that she should, therefore, be given the city without any strings attached to it. Poland did not have to do any arguing. She was in possession of Vilna, legally or illegally, honorably or dishonorably, and there she proposed to remain.

In 1922 the League virtually abandoned the case in despair, thereby proving to the world its inability—or disinclination—to enforce its decisions where a powerful state was concerned. The following year the Council of Ambassadors set its seal of approval on the raid engineered by Pilsudski and executed by Zeligovski by formally assigning to Poland both the city and the district which had been forcibly seized.

Lithuania refused to accept this decision, which violated the most elementary principles of justice and fair play, but failed to obtain any satisfaction from either the Allies or the League of Nations. She was too small and helpless to receive consideration. Realizing that the cards had been stacked against her, she did what any

self-respecting player does when he catches his opponent cheating. She broke off all diplomatic and commercial relations with Poland, severed telegraphic and railway communications between the two countries, closed her frontiers on the Polish side, and has not been on speaking terms with the government at Warsaw since.

In 1923, however, Lithuania partially evened up her score with Poland by the seizure of Memel.

Memel, or Klaipéda, as it is called by the Lithuanians, is a port on the Baltic, at the mouth of the River Niemen. It was the easternmost outpost of old Germany, a timber and saw-mill center of considerable importance. Moreover, it possesses an excellent harbor which is easily susceptible of development. Mémel and a strip of its hinterland was taken from Germany by the Allies. Poland confidently expected to get it, as she likewise expected to get Danzig, but the Peace Conference proposed eventually to give it to the new state of Lithuania as a seaport. It was intended, however, that Memel should be an outlet for Poland as well as a port for Lithuania, and consequently the Niemen was internationalized from Grodno on the Polish frontier to the sea. Pending the final settlement, the town was occupied by a small force of French chasseurs.

The Lithuanians had become restive at the delay in

assigning them Memel, and when the League of Nations let it be known that it had washed its hands of the Vilna seizure, their restiveness burst into a flame of indignation. Following the example set by Poland, they took matters into their own hands. Though there was a pretense of a local revolt, there is little doubt that it was stage-managed by the Lithuanian government. The small French garrison offered virtually no resistance and on January 10, 1923, the Lithuanians took forcible possession of the city and the adjacent territory, thereby reproducing the Vilna affair in every detail save one. *They* did not break their word of honor.

The latest episode in the protracted Vilna drama occurred at Geneva in December, 1927. The Lithuanian government, learning that Polish officials were secretly encouraging the seditious activities of certain Lithuanian revolutionaries who had sought refuge in Poland, made a final appeal to the League of Nations, invoking Article 11 of the Covenant in support of its claim. On this occasion the Lithuanian prime minister, Professor Volde-maras, met Marshal Pilsudski under dramatic circumstances. Stamping into the assembly in full uniform, the Polish dictator confronted the scholarly Lithuanian premier. "Do you want peace or war?" he demanded, crashing his sword-hilt upon the council table. Only one an-

swer was possible. How could one of the weakest nations in Europe, no matter how just its cause, go to war with one of the strongest? Voldemaras said as much, whereupon the members of the Council sighed with obvious relief and Pilsudski, sword clanking, swaggered from the room.

Despite the seizure of her ancient capital and nearly a third of her territory by Poland, and the indifference of the League of Nations, the internal reorganization of Lithuania has made remarkable progress, particularly when it is remembered that the country was completely devastated by the Russians and the Germans. The currency has been stabilized and placed on a gold basis, since when the *litas*, equivalent to one-tenth of an American dollar, has remained steadily at par. Recognizing the necessity of raising the country's educational standards, new schools have been opened everywhere. Lithuania is primarily an agricultural country and its people are being taught modern farming methods through the establishment of agricultural institutes and model farms. Agrarian reform legislation has resulted in the huge estates of the Baltic barons being subdivided into thousands of small farms, so that large areas of fallow or neglected land, formerly reserved for shooting, have now come under intensive cultivation. The roads and bridges

damaged by the warring armies have been repaired and new ones built. New railways are under construction. The harbor of Memel (Klaipéda), formerly an unimportant lumber port, is being enlarged and modernized and there is now direct steamship service between there and the United States. The country is far from rich, the vast majority of its population consisting of peasant farmers, but the sane and progressive policy of the government, plus the industry and energy of the people, has resulted in a steady cultural, economic and financial advance.

Though the Lithuanians still regard Vilna as their capital, the seat of government, as the result of *force majeure*, is Kovno, or Kaunas, to use the native form of the name. As recently as 1928 Kovno was as unattractive a town as could be found in Europe, its unpaved, deeply rutted, miserably lighted streets lined with ramshackle wooden buildings. It was far more suggestive of a western mining camp than of the seat of government of a European nation. But an amazing transformation has been effected. Today the city is well paved, well lighted, with an excellent water supply and a modern system of sanitation. Substantial public buildings, some of them really impressive, have sprung up. Various foreign governments, including the American, have erected suitable

legations. The historic University of Lithuania in Vilna now being under Polish jurisdiction, there has been established in Kovno a State University which is attended by upwards of four thousand students. There is an opera house, a theater for dramatic productions, and a ballet, all maintained by the state. In the tower of the imposing war museum hangs the great bronze Liberty Bell presented to the nation by the Lithuanian-Americans of Chicago.

At one end of the rose garden which surrounds the war museum is a simple stone monument, built in the form of a cairn, in honor of the soldiers who died in defense of Lithuania. Before it stands a stone altar, fashioned after those of pagan times, on which flickers an eternal flame. Here each evening is enacted a simple but extraordinarily touching and impressive ceremony. Just as the sun disappears below the horizon a trumpeter appears on the tower of the museum and sounds a call. Distant music is heard, gradually drawing nearer. The doors of the museum swing open and through the portal march four invalided buglers, playing a solemn march. They are followed by a guard of honor of ten wounded veterans, armed with lances and hobbling along with the aid of canes. Marching slowly to the cenotaph, they stand to attention on either side of it. Their leader gives the

command, "Present arms!", the band plays a funeral march, and slowly, solemnly, simultaneously, the three flags—the national standard, the colors of the state, and the banner of the Order of the Lithuanian Knight—are lowered. In obedience to the command, "Pray for those who died for the liberty of Lithuania," the invalided veterans remove their steel helmets and bow their heads in silent prayer. The prayer ends. The fire on the altar is extinguished. Brass and drums suddenly crash into the stirring strains of the national anthem. The invalids slowly return to the museum. The heavy doors close behind them. The trumpeter on the summit of the bell-tower sounds the retreat and darkness falls as with the turning out of a lamp.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PERIL OF POLISH IMPERIALISM

THE threat in the Polish situation, as I see it, is not from the peoples whom Poland has despoiled, but from the Poles themselves. Can the world be certain that they are content with what they already have? What assurance is there that they will not resume their old tactics of violence when the first favorable opportunity offers? That they will not repeat the *faits accomplis* which gave them Upper Silesia, Eastern Galicia and Vilna? Are we *sure* that Poland has abated her greed for territory, her lust for power?

True, the Polish Foreign Minister, Mr. Zalewski, has repeatedly and vehemently denied such suggestions. He has proclaimed over and over again that his government has no imperialistic ambitions, that it is inspired by no chauvinistic motives, that it desires only to live at peace with its neighbors. And I have no doubt that in making those statements he was perfectly sincere.

The danger lies in the fact that the government in

Warsaw is not the real power in Poland. It is merely a camouflage, a screen, which serves to conceal what is really going on in Poland from the outside world. The real power is in the hands of a group of ambitious, predacious and unscrupulous men, mainly army officers, who will stop at nothing to achieve their ends. Even the ruthless old dictator, Marshal Pilsudski, makes no secret of the fact that he is dissatisfied with the country's present boundaries, that he dreams of a "Greater Poland."

Disclaimers similar to those of Mr. Zalewski have been made by a whole line of Polish statesmen, beginning with Paderewski, yet that did not prevent Korfanty, Zeligovski and their fellow filibusters from carrying out their nefarious schemes or Poland from profiting by them.

By way of showing how empty are the denials of Poland's official spokesmen when it comes to interpreting the real sentiment of the nation, let me quote the opinions of certain Polish individuals and organizations.

In his book, published in 1925, Mr. Roman Dmowski, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and leader of the National Democratic party, writes:

"The Corridor is worthless to Poland unless she obtains East Prussia as well."

Says Dr. Stanislas Slawski in *L'accés de la Pologne à la Mer*:

“It is sufficient to glance at the map to realize that East Prussia forms a barrier which keeps Poland from the sea. . . . East Prussia, by reason of her geographical situation and her means of communication, is clearly indicated as Poland’s access to the sea.”

Mr. Srokovski, formerly Polish Consul-General at Königsberg, is the author of another work in which the annexation of East Prussia is advocated:

“No sacrifice could be too great which would win East Prussia in one way or another, and draw it into the orbit of the Polish race. This would indeed be work of a civilizing character.”

Mr. Stanislas Bukowiecki, who has been Attorney-General of Poland since 1919, has this to say on the subject:

“Here lies for the Polish organism a particularly painful and, at the same time, particularly important spot. East Prussia penetrates the territory of the Polish Republic to a considerable depth . . . it prevents our access to the sea in a central and easterly direction, more particularly affecting the southeastern portion of our State, and compels these portions of our national ter-

ritories to seek a connection with the sea by a long circuitous route. . . . The Danzig corridor, which on the one hand is a stumbling-block to Germany, represents on the other hand a cause of complete dissatisfaction to Poland, something that does not guarantee her a really secure and permanent access to the sea. If it is open to Germany to work for the removal of this obstacle, it is likewise open to us to work for its extension."

Mr. Stanislas Grabski has presided over the Diet, has been Vice-Premier, and was twice Minister of Education. He is evidently of a bellicose temperament, for he says, in writing of Upper Silesia, that the Poles in that district "should wage a war without quarter against the German element."

On the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Poland the Academic Union of Pan-Polish Youth declared:

"Today we turn our eyes across the frontiers to our compatriots in Silesia, Prussian Masuria and Western Pomerellia, to whom it has hitherto not been granted to breathe the air of the liberated fatherland. On the tenth anniversary of our independence we take solemn oath to fight for a great Poland, within whose frontiers there will be room for all its sons."

Even more ambitious are the aims of the Polish As-

sociation for the Protection of the Western Marches. It defines its program in a manifesto of which the following is a significant passage:

“The natural frontier of Poland in the West is the Oder, in the East the Middle and the Lower Duna. That is why our motto will be ‘From Stettin to Riga.’ In the meantime, however, we do not wish to quarrel with Russia because she has not finally renounced Riga, for, in spite of all, Riga will ultimately be ours.”

These quotations cannot be dismissed by Poland’s official spokesmen with a wave of the hand and the jaunty assertion that they are merely the idle vaporings of irresponsible persons. Men who have held the portfolios of foreign affairs and education in the Polish cabinet, who have occupied the posts of attorney-general, and consul-general, organizations whose memberships run into the hundreds of thousands, are not irresponsible. Their chauvinistic utterances may be embarrassing to a government which is striving to convince the world of its good intentions, but they unquestionably voice the sentiments of the Polish people.

Germany believes, and Lithuania believes, and Russia believes that Poland intends eventually still further to enrich herself at their expense. Lithuania is helpless. Russia can presumably take care of herself. But



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#### THE MASTER OF POLAND

Marshal Joseph Pilsudski believes that the best argument in international disputes is the sword

what, it may be asked, will happen if Poland, taking advantage of Germany's enforced disarmament, attempts to seize East Prussia, as the gentlemen I have just quoted advocate? France is bound to Poland by a hard-and-fast military alliance. If Germany attempted to resist a Polish invasion of her territory, as she undoubtedly would do, would France declare war on her? What would be England's attitude? Would the League of Nations stand helplessly by, wringing its hands and imploring time to study the question, while one of its members was being despoiled? If not, *what would it do?*

The trouble with the Poles, as I see them, is that they are lacking in certain qualities which go to the making of a well-balanced and responsible nation.

They have no sense of fair play. They invaded Lithuania and seized Vilna because they knew that Lithuania was too weak to resist. A nation of twenty-seven millions of people against one of less than two millions. A sorry spectacle, and a shameful one for Poland. They imposed their will on the Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia for the same reason. One of the most powerful armies in Europe, equipped with all the paraphernalia of modern warfare, crushing the resistance of a handful of poorly organized, ill-armed patriots. They invaded Russia

when they supposed that Russia was down and out—and the Red army drove them back to the very gates of their capital before a French military mission could arrive and straighten out the mess. They swept Upper Silesia with fire and sword, maltreating and even murdering the defenseless inhabitants. But they knew that they could do so with safety to themselves because Germany was unable to defend herself.

They have no respect for their solemn pledges. To them a treaty is but a scrap of paper. They have broken the Treaty of Versailles; they have broken the Minority Treaties; they broke the Suwalki Agreement; they have defied the Supreme Council, the Council of Ambassadors and the League of Nations.

No government has ever prospered in the long run by pursuing a policy of aggression, injustice, wholesale denial and self-glorification. What, more than anything else, has caused Poland to be viewed by her immediate neighbors, and by thoughtful men elsewhere, with fear and suspicion? The answer must be—her inveterate, instinctive, unchangeable habit of defiance.

You think, perhaps, that such charges are exaggerated, without justification. But I do not ask you to accept my personal opinion. Read, if you please, what David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of England, had

to say on the subject in a speech delivered on May 13, 1921, in the House of Commons:

“Who won the Treaty of Versailles? Not Poland. Poland was by a cruel fate—I am not criticizing her—divided in the War. Half her sons were fighting for the Allies under the banner of Russia and half were fighting against the Allies, but the Poles did not win the War. The half fighting for the Allies were beaten with the armies with which they were associated, broken, scattered, driven like cattle. Poland fell, and if we had depended upon the armies of Poland that were fighting for the Allies, Poland today would have been either a German or an Austrian province. The half that were fighting against the Allies fought to the end. Polish troops in German uniforms were shooting down Frenchmen and British and Italians who were fighting for Poland’s freedom. The liberty of Poland is due to Italy, Britain and France. There is not a letter in the Treaty of Versailles that does not mean a young British life, not a letter that does not mean nearly two French lives, and there were hundreds of thousands of Italians. Poland above all ought to respect every comma in the Treaty of Versailles, and now that Germany is disarmed, when Germany is helpless through the action of the Allies, Poland says she will fight even against

the Treaty of Versailles for Silesia. I see M. Korfanty says that all the Poles in Silesia will die rather than surrender. If they had thought that earlier, when the battle for Polish freedom was being fought, there would have been fewer British, French and Italian lives lost. But they have thought of it only when Germany is disarmed and helpless."

The Poles are utterly lacking in a sense of humor—or a sense of proportion, which is much the same thing. They are suffering from what the alienists term "delusions of grandeur." They believe—many of them at least—that Poland is the foremost country in the world. No, not irresponsible, crazy-headed youths, but such men as General Albrecht von Haller, who, barring only Marshal Pilsudski, is the greatest hero of modern Poland. He is one of the ultra-nationalists who envisions a still greater Poland. In a conversation with Sir Robert Donald, formerly editor of the London *Daily Chronicle*, he said:

"There are five great countries in Europe—England, France, Germany, Italy and Poland, but the greatest of the five is Poland."

I admit that the picture I have drawn is a gloomy one. But the problems I have outlined—the Corridor, Upper

Silesia, Eastern Galicia and Lithuania—are not insoluble.

Germany is willing to give as well as take. More willing now than she will be later on when she is stronger. I imagine that, in exchange for the present Corridor, or even for a small portion of it, she would consent to cede to Poland another road to the sea along the eastern frontier of East Prussia, and to recompense the Poles for their expenditures on their new railway in the Corridor and their new port at Gdynia. There is no port on the portion of the coast I have mentioned, it is true, but neither was there a port at Gdynia until the Poles built one. Thus Poland would have the outlet she requires, her security would be assured, and East Prussia would be reunited to the Reich. In addition to this it may be assumed that Germany would repeat the offer she has already made to give Poland a free harbor area at Hamburg or Bremen, a right which Czechoslovakia enjoys at Stettin.

To many this suggestion may appear fantastic, as it probably is, yet, given the existing conditions, I should like to hear a better one.

As to Upper Silesia, I should guess that Germany would be contented with an arrangement whereby those districts which are predominantly German in pop-

ulation or sentiment, as shown by the plebiscite, were returned to her; and Poland's agreement to observe the spirit as well as the letter of the minority treaties in the others.

I have already said that Poland's problem in Eastern Galicia would disappear if she would grant to the Ukrainians the very considerable measure of autonomy which was promised them and bring to an end the policy of brutality and repression which her officials are pursuing in that region.

In certain respects the Vilna question is the most difficult of solution, for here either Poland or Lithuania must back down. It is barely possible, however, that a compromise might be effected, such as the constitution of the Vilna district into some sort of an autonomous and neutralized area, under Lithuanian administration but Polish protection, thereby enabling both governments to save face.

England and the United States, confronted by similar problems, would have solved them amicably long ago. All that is required is sincerity, common sense, good nature and a willingness to give and take.

But the Poles, stiff-necked, stubborn, heady from their new-found power, refuse to yield an inch. They have announced over and over again that what they have

they keep. And that they expect to have more before they have finished. They are emboldened in this obduracy by France, whose whole foreign policy is based on the thesis that Poland must be kept strong and Germany weak. That is why France refuses even to consider a revision of the peace treaties. That is why she is so lavish in her credits and her promises to her eastern allies. It is this time-worn policy of maintaining the balance of power—with the scales weighted heavily in France's favor—which has already wrecked Europe more than once, and which, if persisted in, will again bring her to the verge of ruin.

No intelligent person who is familiar with the facts believes that the present situation can continue indefinitely, if for no other reason than that Poland cannot stand the financial strain. She cannot remain an armed camp forever. Her forces today, in time of peace, total upward of 312,000 men, or more than double the strength of the standing army of the British Empire exclusive of native troops. To maintain this enormous establishment requires approximately 28 per cent of the total revenues of Poland. And she is not a rich country either.

Barring some unforeseen incident, neither the Corridor nor Silesia presents any immediate danger. Ger-

many is not yet ready. She is strong today. She will be vastly stronger a few years hence. In five years, say. Or, if you prefer, in ten. She is determined now. Before long she will be defiant. And, mark you, when that day comes she will not stand alone. In the event of a German-Polish conflict it is inconceivable that the Russians and the Lithuanians, to say nothing of the Ukrainians in Galicia, all of whom hate and fear Poland, would fail to seize such an opportunity to settle their scores. In fact, no country in the world is so completely hemmed in by enemies as Poland. Germany, Danzig, East Prussia, Lithuania, Russia, the Ukraine—she has reason to fear them all, as they have reason to fear her. Her relations with Czechoslovakia, though “entirely satisfactory,” as the diplomats put it, are none too friendly. The only one of her immediate neighbors with whom she is on anything approaching cordial terms is Rumania. “Queer, isn’t it,” as the proud mother remarked upon seeing her son pass in a parade, “how everyone is out of step except my Johnnie?”

The discouraging feature of the whole sorry business is the indifference of the world to the impending peril and the weakness of the European statesmen. Courageous statesmanship, plus the pressure of world opinion, could force Poland and Germany to come to terms.

But the world is apathetic, the statesmen are either timid or selfish, and the League of Nations is a joke—a rather tragic one. With none to hold them in check Messrs. Pilsudski, Hitler, *et al* will have their way in the end.

*The good old rule sufficeth them, the simple plan,  
That they shall take who have the power  
And they shall keep who can.*

## CHAPTER X

### ITALY AND FRANCE

FOR some inscrutable reason the word “war” is anathema in well-regulated chancelleries and state departments, embassies and legations, and the person who ventures to use it—to speak right out in meeting, as it were—is either politely ridiculed or scathingly scored as an alarmist. The nearest your professional diplomat ever comes to acknowledging the possibility of war is the guarded admission that “relations are strained” or “considerable tension exists” between certain governments. That is the way the diplomatic mind works. It is trained to deny or ignore or minimize unpalatable facts.

When, upon America’s declaration of war in 1917, I was detailed by the War Department to make a speaking tour of the Middle West for the dual purpose of encouraging recruiting and the purchase of Liberty Bonds, I was warned by the State Department that I must on no account give the impression that the United States was mobilizing. And when, in the course of an address in Kansas City, I condemned the seditious activ-

ties of a distinguished German orchestra leader of Boston, the scandalized diplomats of the State Department insisted that I should be given an official reprimand!

Diplomats are supposed to be to nations what doctors are to individuals. It is their job to cure disease or at least to prevent its spread. But what would you think of a doctor who, though aware that a patient was suffering from a highly infectious disease, sought to ignore or minimize the gravity of the man's condition for fear that it might alarm the neighborhood? Good doctors, of course, do not do that. Realizing the danger, they quarantine the patient, acquaint his family with the facts, and set about eradicating the disease by treatment or an operation. If diplomats had the candor and courage of doctors the world would be in a healthier condition today.

In discussing the Franco-Italian situation, and the Italian-Yugoslav situation which is in great measure an outgrowth from it, I shall talk to you as candidly as a doctor talks to the family of a patient. Instead of employing euphemisms I shall lay before you the facts as they appear to me. For one of the gravest potential dangers to the peace of the world is the ill-concealed animosity and suspicion which exist between Italy and France, and the sooner this is recognized the greater is

the likelihood of a remedy being found before it is too late.

Italy feels, and perhaps not without justification, that in the division of the war spoils she was badly treated by her former allies, and this ill treatment she attributes, justly or unjustly, to France.

Despite all attempts to minimize them, Italy's contributions to the war efforts of the Allies were enormous. From 1915 on she held a battle-line longer than the French, British and Belgian fronts combined. She was the only one of the Allied nations which won a clean-cut and decisive victory. Recovering from her apparently irretrievable defeat at Caporetto, she attacked on the Piave with 51 divisions an Austro-German army of 63 divisions and completely annihilated it, capturing some 600,000 prisoners and 7,000 guns. By thus opening the door into the heart of Germany, Italy contributed materially to the German collapse eight days later. Her sacrifices in human life were appalling—well over 600,000 dead and more than a million wounded, a quarter of them permanently disabled. And, it might be added, there are far more Italian soldiers buried in French soil than there are French buried in the soil of Italy.

But, when the war was won, Italy was treated like a poor relation. She was denied Fiume (which was there-



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EDUARD BENES, FOREIGN MINISTER OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA  
Guiding spirit of the Little Entente and an implacable foe of Germany, Austria  
and Hungary

upon seized by d'Annunzio) and Dalmatia. She did not receive the mandate in Asia Minor which had been promised her by the Treaty of London. She was given no share in the loot of the German colonies. And France even refused to adjust the status of the 85,000 Italians who form the majority of the European colony in Tunisia.

Yet Italy saw vast slices of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which she had conquered awarded, at the behest of France, to nations which had played no conspicuous or important parts in the war. She saw the Croats and Slovenes, who had remained to the end loyal adherents of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, treated as allies instead of as enemies. She saw the entire eastern coast of the Adriatic from Fiume to Albania (barring a few square miles at Zara) handed over to Yugoslavia. In Asia she saw the tricolor hoisted over Syria and the Union Jack over Iraq. In Africa and the Pacific she saw all the German colonies, with a total area of more than a million square miles (over one-third the size of the United States), divided between England, France and Japan as a gang of hungry boys would divide a stolen pie. Is it to be wondered at that Italy is resentful? Is she unjustified in asserting that her late allies have not given her a square deal?

Nevertheless, her grievances over the distribution of the war spoils would doubtless have been forgotten had France adopted a different attitude.

Ever since the war France's foreign policy has been doubled-barreled: to keep Germany weak and to prevent Italy's "pacific penetration" of the Balkans and Western Asia, two regions which France regards as within her own sphere of influence. To effect this dual object France organized the Little Entente—Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia—the last-named nation not only lying squarely across Italy's road to the East but threatening Italy's control of the Adriatic, which all Italians look upon as a *mare nostrum*. Despite the unconcealed animosity which the Yugoslavs have displayed toward Italy—and it must be confessed that the Italians have repaid it with interest—France has encouraged her allies with moral support, money and munitions. Hence, whenever an anti-Italian incident occurs in Yugoslavia—and there have been many of them—Italy professes to see in it the subtle hand of the Quai d'Orsay.

Thirdly, there is the question of naval armaments. To put this highly complicated question into a nutshell, Italy demands naval parity with France. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that she demands that

France shall assent in principle to such parity. This France refuses to do on the ground that for the protection of her vast colonial empire she requires a stronger navy than Italy, whose none too populous colonies in Libia and along the Red Sea shore are comparatively close at hand. In other words, France treats Italy as a second-class power, an attitude which has wounded the pride, aroused the resentment and stiffened the obstinacy of the Italians.

In justification of their claim to naval parity, the Italians remind the world that the population of Italy exceeds by upwards of a million the population of France. They compare the geographical features of the two countries: France with 1,760 miles of coast-line; Italy with 4,968. Open up the atlas and glance at the map of Italy. You will note that, with the exception of Milan and Turin, virtually every Italian city of importance—Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, Florence, Rome, Naples, Palermo, Syracuse, Catania, Brindisi, Bari, Rimini, Venice, Trieste, Fiume—is either on the sea or so near the sea as to be at the mercy of long-range naval guns or sea-planes.

The Italians also point to the fact that whereas France has within easy reach by land ample supplies of coal, oil and iron ore, Italy must in a large measure obtain

all three by sea, so that her security, indeed her very existence, depends upon the protection of her sea communications. Nor does France's further contention that she must have a superior navy in order to ensure the safe convoying of her colored troops from Africa to Europe in case of war tend to modify the Italian attitude.

It is frequently asserted that in their demand for naval parity with France the Italians are only bluffing. To subscribe to that opinion is to betray an abysmal misunderstanding of the Italian temperament. Far from bluffing, Italy is in deadly earnest. No matter how intolerable may be the financial burden, she is prepared to keep pace with France, ton for ton, if the Paris government persists in its present policy. Mind you, I do not think that Italy has the slightest intention of building up to French strength, once her right to do so is unequivocally acknowledged, if for no other reason than that her financial condition does not permit of her entering into such competition with the richest nation in Europe. But—and make no mistake about this—if Italy is denied naval parity, then all the complicated formulæ of the experts, all the elaborate plans for disarmament on which the diplomats and the admirals have been working at Geneva, are but worthless paper.

A fourth reason for Italy's animus toward France is

the latter's attitude over the question of Tunisia, which, as you know, is separated by only a few score miles of sea from Sicily. The controversy over Tunisia is of long standing. In 1869, when the beylik went bankrupt, England, France and Italy took steps to protect their interests by establishing a triple control over Tunisian finances. During the succeeding decade, however, Italian emigrants and capital poured into the country so rapidly that the French became alarmed at this peaceful penetration of a region which they had marked down as their own. The Quai d'Orsay decided that something had to be done about it. Accordingly, in 1881, a French force crossed the Algerian frontier on the pretext of pursuing certain marauding tribes, but, quickly dropping the mask, advanced on the capital and compelled the bey to accept a French protectorate. In popular parlance, the French double-crossed their partners. This action, the ethics of which are certainly open to question, the Italians have never forgiven. Today there are 71,000 French in Tunisia as against nearly 90,000 Italians. In an attempt to give the protectorate a more French character, a decree was issued in 1921 declaring that Italian subjects, born of parents either of whom was also born in Tunisia, would be deemed of French nationality. This decree provoked deep resentment among

the Italians, whose right to maintain their nationality was protected by a convention of 1896 still provisionally in force. Thus far there has been no settlement of the question, which has resulted in numerous controversies and has been productive of much friction.

Still another cause of friction is found in France's failure to revise the boundaries between French West Africa and Italian Libia in Italy's favor, as the government at Paris provisionally agreed to do shortly after the war. It is essential to the prosperity of Libia (the name adopted as the common designation of the two Italian colonies of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica), which at present consists mainly of worthless desert, that its hinterland be pushed southward in order to give it access to the rich markets in the vicinity of Lake Tchad. France's reluctance to effect the promised revision has caused considerable hard feeling on the part of the Italians.

I have now outlined for you the five outstanding causes of Italy's animus toward France: (1) France's refusal to allot Italy a share in the German colonies or a mandate in Western Asia; (2) France's anti-Italian policy in the Balkans, particularly her support of Yugoslavia; (3) France's refusal to grant naval parity to Italy; (4) France's attempt forcibly to nationalize the Italians of Tunisia; and (5) France's evasive policy in

regard to the expansion of the Libian hinterland.

Underlying all these, however; the real reason for Italy's demand for colonies, for her insistence on naval parity, for her need of expansion; the primary cause of all the uneasiness and suspicion and friction, is the babies, the Italian babies, the chubby, lusty, crowing Giuseppes and Giovannas who are coming into the world so rapidly that Italy is at her wits' end to know what to do with them all. Already there are more than forty-one million Italians cooped up in a narrow peninsula, almost an island, smaller than the State of New Mexico. And the babies are arriving at the rate of nearly half a million a year. What is Italy going to do in, say, another twenty years? Figure it out for yourself.

Millions of Italians have emigrated, of course, and are building railways in the United States or raising sheep in the Argentine, and in the course of time their children are named John or Enrique, Sadie or Carmen, and they forget the mother-tongue and give the fruits of their labors to another country and their allegiance to another flag.

Now all this is a bad thing for Italy. And no one knows it better than Mussolini, who has placed an embargo on emigration. But that does not solve the problem, for the day is not far distant when Italy will be

unable to support her population. There you have the reason why Italy must expand, so that the little Giuseppes and Giovannas of today may find homes and occupations under their own flag tomorrow. It will be realized, therefore, that Italy's determination to expand is not due to imperialism, as her enemies would have you believe and as some of Mussolini's speeches would suggest; it is due to physical necessity. To attempt to stem that urge is as futile as was King Canute's attempt to drive back the sea.

A ray of sunshine pierced the clouds hanging so ominously over Franco-Italian relations when it was announced early in March, 1931, that, as the result of prolonged and delicate negotiations, the governments at Paris and Rome had agreed to take a five-year "naval holiday," thereby bringing their dangerous friction on the subject of naval parity to an end for the time being.

The conclusion of this accord, which eliminates until 1936 the peril of Franco-Italian competition in shipbuilding, was due to the mediation of the British Foreign Minister, Arthur Henderson, and to the statesmanship, sincerity and mutual good will of the foreign ministers of France and Italy, Aristide Briand and Dino Grandi. All three had been striving for upwards of a year to find a way whereby France and Italy might find a way to

adhere to the Hoover-MacDonald Naval Pact without sacrifice of security or prestige, and the success which finally crowned their efforts constitutes one of the most encouraging omens that has appeared on Europe's political horizon since the war.

Broadly speaking, the agreement (subject to ratification) provides that upon the completion of the naval programs already undertaken, Italy and France shall drop their squabble over parity and take a holiday until 1936, when the Hoover-MacDonald Pact expires. By that date Italy will have substantial parity with France in *new ships*, but France would have all along a considerable superiority in *old ships*.

Translated into actual figures, this means that by 1936 France will have a total naval tonnage of 670,000 and Italy 441,000, and an efficient tonnage of 586,000 for France and 436,000 for Italy, thus leaving France with a margin of superiority of 150,000 tons. In effect, however, the agreement gives the two powers something approaching parity in the Mediterranean (which is Italy's chief concern), for the margin in France's favor is offset, at least in French eyes, by Germany's formidable "pocket battleships," one of which is already in commission while two more have been authorized.

This accord will relieve France of a heavy shipbuild-

ing burden and minimize the threat to world peace in Franco-Italian naval competition. It is rumored, moreover, that it will be followed by further negotiations having as their object the settlement of other irritating questions, such as the status of Italian subjects in Tunisia and the revision of the Franco-Italian frontiers in Central Africa.

The rapprochement effected by the efforts of Messrs. Briand, Grandi and Henderson is extremely encouraging, yet it would be folly to assume that it will put an end to Franco-Italian friction. It will take something more than a naval compromise—particularly as that compromise gives France a superiority of 150,000 tons—to allay Italian suspicions so long as France maintains a military alliance with Italy's bitterest enemy, Yugoslavia.

In my opinion there has never been serious danger of war between Italy and France over naval or colonial questions, though they would be, of course, contributory factors. Should war come it would be as a result of France's Balkan policy and she would be dragged into it by her hot-headed Yugoslav allies. Not in the Alps nor in the Mediterranean, but along the Adriatic, where Slav and Latin glare and snarl at each other like angry dogs, is the real danger-point.

## CHAPTER XI

### ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA

Italian-Yugoslav animosity goes back to the days of the Peace Conference, when both nations laid passionate claim to the entire eastern shores of the Adriatic down to Albania and beyond. When President Wilson refused to award Fiume to Italy, that city was seized by a force of filibusters under the Italian soldier-poet, Gabriele d'Annunzio. But when, in 1920, that eminently level-headed politician, Giolitti, became Italian premier for the last time he resolved to enforce the treaty he had concluded with the Yugoslavs by turning the poet out of Fiume, which he did by ordering the city to be bombarded.

D'Annunzio's precipitate departure did not mark the end of the city's troubles, however, for there followed a long series of disputes, protests, notes, demonstrations, bickerings and ultimatums, the affair not being finally settled until 1924, when, as the result of negotiations between the Italian and Yugoslav governments it was agreed that the city itself, with the larger of its two

harbors, should go to Italy, while the suburb of Sussak, together with the smaller harbor and the river delta, should become Yugoslav.

Since then superficial peace has reigned in Fiume, but its old-time commercial importance has dwindled almost to the vanishing-point, for the completion of the last link in the railway connecting Spalato with the hinterland diverted Yugoslav trade from Fiume, while the Adriatic Steamship Line, a Yugoslav concern, starts from Port Baross, as the harbor of Sussak is called, and boycotts the Italian port of Zara farther down the coast. To illustrate the asinine lengths to which the quarrel has been carried I might mention that not until the summer of 1930 did the New York-Trieste steamers of the Cosulich Line venture to pass through the narrow and very beautiful channel which separates the Island of Brazza from the mainland because of the hostile demonstrations made by the Yugoslavs.

Despite Italy's contention that the whole eastern littoral of the Adriatic is Italian by tradition, culture and conquest, the Peace Conference awarded to Yugoslavia the entire coast from Sussak down to Albania with the exception of the ancient Venetian town of Zara, which, with a small enclave, was given to Italy.

Ever since the peace settlements the relations between

Italy and Yugoslavia have steadily grown worse. Italian subjects have been attacked and even murdered, Italian consulates mobbed, Italian flags burned, and the Italians, in turn, have made reprisals. It has been noted by those who closely follow the course of international relations, however, that during the past year Mussolini has abandoned his bellicose attitude toward Yugoslavia. He has ceased his saber-rattling and, in the face of numerous provocations, has remained ominously silent. The reason for this astonishing *volte face* is, I believe, that the Italian dictator has rather tardily come to the realization that continued Italian hostility would only cause the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to sink their differences and present a united front to Italy. Whereas if he holds aloof, so that astute statesman doubtless argues, the hatred of the Croats and the Slovenes for the Serbs will eventually precipitate civil war and the break-up of the Yugoslav kingdom.

Owing to the tremendous natural rampart formed by the Carso, the Carnic and Dinaric Alps; the wilderness of islands and wealth of anchorages along her coast; and the highly formidable fighting qualities of her people, Yugoslavia occupies a very strong defensive position, and an invasion by Italy would be fraught with hazards. On the other hand, it would be suicidal for the Yugoslavs to

undertake an offensive against Italy single-handed. What the Italians fear is not Yugoslavia by herself, but Yugoslavia supported by French battalions, airplanes and warships. For, with France attacking on the north and Yugoslavia on the east, Italy would find herself in a perilous position. From behind the archipelago of islands screening the Yugoslav coast French light cruisers and submarines could dart out into the Adriatic to destroy Italian commerce and bombard Italian coast towns, and, before a combined Franco-Yugoslav attack, Albania, which Italy regards as her stepping-stone to the Balkan peninsula, could quite easily be conquered.

Though considerable uncertainty exists as to the terms of the Franco-Yugoslav alliance, there is no doubt whatsoever that France, by her loans and promises of armed support, exercises a dominant voice in shaping the foreign policy of the Balkan kingdom; and the Italians, at any rate, are convinced that the antagonistic attitude of the Belgrade government is largely due to French encouragement.

I did not fully realize how deep-seated is this conviction until I recently made a trip by motor through the length and breadth of the Italian peninsula. I made it my business to obtain the views of all sorts and conditions of people, and all of them were outspoken in

their suspicion of Franco-Yugoslav designs. Again and again I heard the two countries named as Italy's enemies, and such assertions never failed to win approval and applause. There may be no justification for such suspicion, but that is beside the point. What I wish to impress upon you is that it exists from one end of Italy to the other.

My own opinion is that there exists no point of dispute between Italy and Yugoslavia which could not be amicably adjusted were the leaders of the two nations to sit down with their cigars before an open fire and sensibly talk things over. But such an attempt at reconciliation is impossible of realization as long as France persists in her present policy of using Yugoslavia as a pawn in the perilous game she is playing to thwart Italian ambitions in the Balkans, which the government at Rome regards as within Italy's sphere of influence and as a legitimate field for financial and commercial expansion. Nothing is more certain, however, than that the attitude of the Yugoslavs would undergo a complete transformation overnight were they convinced that should they become engaged in a war with Italy they could not count on France's active support.

## CHAPTER XII

### ALBANIA

IF France has a pawn in Yugoslavia, Italy has one in Albania. This little mountain kingdom, which lies on the eastern shore of the Adriatic directly opposite the heel of the Italian boot, is, perhaps, Europe's greatest danger-spot. Here, above the Accursed Mountains, storms break suddenly. At any moment, without the slightest warning, Albania may be the scene of an incident which may well give it the same tragic importance that was thrust upon the Bosnian town of Serajevo in June, 1914, by the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne.

Though in size Albania is comparatively insignificant—only about the area of New Hampshire and Vermont combined and with a scarcely greater population—it is of immense political importance because of its situation. The gateway to the Nearer East and commanding the entrance to the Adriatic Sea, it lies squarely athwart the course of empire of two ambitious and aggressive nations.

Before proceeding with a discussion of the Albanian situation, however, permit me to digress long enough to tell you something about the Albanian ruler, King Zog, for it is entirely conceivable that future events may give him an international importance entirely out of proportion to the size of his country.

Zog is the last ruler of romance, the sole survival of knight-errantry, the only reigning sovereign who to lead his people in battle has actually taken weapons from the wall. He is the supreme overlord of a wild and rugged land where the politically ambitious rely on the bullet instead of the ballot, the rifle instead of the referendum. His life has brimmed over with danger and adventure since he was a schoolboy in his teens.

The youngest ruler in Europe and the only unmarried one, he is one of the most picturesque and romantic figures of our time. Slender, handsome, a stranger to fear, retiring in manner but utterly ruthless when occasion demands, Zog might have stepped straight from the pages of a story-book or from the motion-picture screen. His title in the Albanian tongue is King of the Eagle People, and it is not an empty one.

He lives amid romantic surroundings. His castle on the headland above Durazzo looks down on the beach where landed the lances of the First Crusade under God-

frey de Bouillon. Past his palace in Tirana runs the old Roman road to Byzantium and the Golden Horn. From his modest seaside villa on the sands of the Adriatic can be seen, far to the eastward, the purple peaks of the Accursed Mountains.

It is no exaggeration to say that on this slim young man depends in no small measure the peace of Europe. He is balancing himself on the middle of a narrow, slippery plank, with Italy and Yugoslavia see-sawing at either end. Should he be dislodged from his precarious foothold, either by revolution or assassination, nothing is more certain than that anarchy would break loose in Albania, whereupon both the rival powers inevitably would intervene, thereby precipitating an armed collision which would shake the continent.

Ahmed Zogolli (he dropped the "olli," which signifies "son of," when he became king) is the hereditary chieftain of the Mati, a clan of mountain warriors in Northern Albania who never compound a blood feud but fight it out to the last man. His father and his grandfather were both pashas in the Turkish service and one of his ancestors was grand vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

When the first Balkan War broke out in 1912 Ahmed was attending a military school in Constantinople, a lad

of barely seventeen. His clansmen refusing to aid the Turks save under the leadership of their young chieftain, the boy was taken out of school and hurried across the peninsula to his native mountains, where he organized the tribes and personally led them in battle against the invading Serbs. He did not direct operations from a headquarters in the rear, you understand, but from the firing-line, in the thick of the fighting. They say that in battle he is as cool as a winter's morning.

Ever since the Dark Ages the Albanians—who had been ruled by eleven nations in succession—had fought bravely but unsuccessfully to rid themselves of foreign domination. But with the outbreak of the Great War young Ahmed realized that his country's golden opportunity had come. Unfurling the ancient eagle-banner of Skanderbeg and summoning all patriots to follow him, he swept down upon the Albanian plain, driving the Serbs before him and occupying town after town. In order to make his victories secure he agreed to coöperate with the Austrians, but they, becoming suspicious of his loyalty to the Central Powers, invited him to Vienna and there interned him.

Upon his release he returned to Albania, where he was instrumental in driving the Italians from Valona, halting another Yugoslav invasion, crushing numerous

insurrections, and obtaining the recognition of Albania's independence by the Allies. All this he did without a war-chest worthy the name, in spite of intrigue within the country, of diplomatic pressure and threats of invasion from without.

In 1924, as the result of a revolutionary coup engineered by Bishop Fan Noli, the Patriarch of the Albanian Orthodox Church and once a resident of Boston, Zog had to flee the country. But some months later he returned to Albania, organized a counter-revolution, and overthrew the Fan Noli régime. His rise to political power has been meteoric. Successively Minister of the Interior, Minister of War, Prime Minister, Dictator, and first President of the Albanian Republic, in 1928, at Tirana, this thirty-two-year-old soldier-statesman was proclaimed "His Majesty Zog I, King of the Albanians."

Thus far his reign has been neither a quiet nor a safe one. That he is in constant danger of assassination, a virtual prisoner in his own palace, is due to the blood feud, which is peculiarly an Albanian institution. As a consequence of this system of revenging murder by murder, Albania has lost an enormous percentage of its population by assassination, it being estimated that at the end of the last century more than a third of all the men in the country had died with their boots on.



*Acme Newspictures*

#### ZOG I, KING OF ALBANIA

He is a character out of a story-book; he might have stepped straight from the motion-picture screen. The overlord of a wild and rugged land, his life has brimmed over with danger and adventure since he was a schoolboy in his teens.

It is due wholly to King Zog that this practice of wholesale murder has now largely gone out of fashion. He stamped it out, partly by disarmament and partly by persuasion. And only those who know the importance which an Albanian attaches to his rifle, his pistol and his silver-mounted yataghan will realize what the disarmament of such a people means. But, though he succeeded in pacifying the country, and murders due to blood feud fell to a minimum, King Zog brought upon himself the wrath of numerous mountain clans who were opposed to such reforms and resented being disarmed.

Moreover, at the outset of his administration, the anarchical conditions prevailing in the country compelled him to institute a rule of blood and iron. Anyone found guilty of plotting against the government—and there were many such—was summarily hanged. The kinsmen of those who perished on the gallows thereupon swore blood revenge against the king. When I was in Albania recently I was told that there were more than eight hundred blood feuds directed against him. That may be, and probably is, an exaggeration, but in any event his life is in constant danger, even outside of his own dominions, as proved by the attempt made to assassinate him by an exiled feudist as he was leaving the Vienna opera house in the spring of 1931. To make his existence

still more trying, he has had to steer a hazardous middle course which will give offense to neither Italy nor Yugoslavia while at the same time retaining the confidence of his suspicious, warlike and independence-loving countrymen.

The king's health is far from good, though whether his condition is as grave as has been rumored may be questioned. He himself told me that he was suffering from an affection of the throat caused by excessive smoking, which is scarcely surprising in view of the reports that he smoked two hundred and fifty cigarettes a day until quite recently, when his doctors intervened. His death would be an unmitigated calamity for Albania, for that troubled country desperately needs his cool head, sound judgment and firm hand. It would, moreover, inevitably bring on a revolution, for Zog's only male heir is his nephew, a lad in his teens. It may be assumed that the claims of this young prince would be contested by numerous opponents of the present régime, the most formidable being Bishop Fan Noli, at present living in exile, who is known to have an eye on the throne. Fan Noli, however, has many enemies both within and without the country—the Yugoslav government would be certain to oppose him—so that an attempt on his part to seize the reins of power would in all likelihood pro-

duce both internal troubles and foreign intervention.

Though ostensibly an independent kingdom, Albania is recognized as being within Italy's "sphere of influence." This may be interpreted as meaning that Italy regards Albania as a younger sister, expects her to be guided by Italian advice, and will tolerate no outside interference in family affairs. Though the term "protectorate" is taboo in Albania, the indisputable fact remains that the country is under Italian protection in pretty much everything save name. Perhaps the closest analogy is to be found in the relations between the United States and Nicaragua.

There are eight hundred Italian military instructors in the country and the army is being trained along Italian lines, its uniform being scarcely distinguishable from the Italian. The highly efficient air service which links the principal towns in Albania is owned and operated by Italians. The Bank of Albania is an Italian institution. Italy recently loaned Albania ten million dollars with the stipulation that it should be expended under Italian supervision for the construction of harbor-works, bridges and roads. The harbor-works will facilitate the debarkation of Italian troops; the bridges are being built to support heavy artillery and tanks; the roads lead toward the Yugoslav frontier. The truth is

that the hand of Italy is apparent everywhere in the country, as, for example, in the recent dismissal of a number of the British officers of the national gendarmerie, who, it may be assumed, will be replaced with Italians.

It is not at all surprising that Yugoslavia regards an Albania under Italy's thinly veiled control as a pistol pointed straight at her heart and has taken measures accordingly. Based on Scutari and Monastir are Yugoslav divisions on a war footing, ready to invade Albania at a moment's notice. While across the Adriatic, with Brindisi and Bari as its bases, an Italian expeditionary force is held in constant readiness to occupy Albania in the event of trouble. Should trouble break, it would be a race between the two rivals for Tirana, the Albanian capital, with the odds slightly in favor of the Yugoslavs getting there first.

From this it will be seen that the pistol is set on a hair-trigger and that the slightest pressure may cause its discharge. For Albania is a country in which anything may happen at any moment. Suppose that Zog dies, either peacefully in his bed, or by the hand of an assassin, leaving his young nephew to contend with Fan Noli or some other revolutionary leader for the throne. Suppose the Italian minister in Tirana is assassinated. Or the Yugo-

slav minister. For there are many patriotic but irresponsible Albanians who bitterly resent Italy's domination of their country, just as there are many others who hate the Yugoslavs and fear them. Any of these things may happen suddenly, without a moment's warning. Albania would be plunged into chaos long before the ponderous machinery of the League of Nations could be set in motion. Whereupon Italy, in order to protect her nationals and her extensive interests, would undoubtedly deem it necessary to intervene, just as we intervened for similar reasons in Cuba, Mexico, Haiti, Nicaragua. Within twenty-four hours Italian troops in war kit would be piling aboard the waiting transports at Brindisi and Bari. But Yugoslav public opinion would never tolerate an Italian military occupation of Albania, and while the Italian legions were disembarking at Durazzo and Valona long columns of Yugoslav soldiery would be hastening by forced marches down the roads which lead from Scutari and Monastir to the Albanian capital. Another world war would have begun.

For surely no one acquainted with the facts will contend that such a conflict could be localized. France would be in honor bound to come to the aid of her Yugoslav allies. It is unlikely that Hungary, whose relations with Italy have become very close, would neglect

such an opportunity to regain the territory she was forced to cede to Yugoslavia. That would be the signal for Czechoslovakia to set her armies in motion with Budapest as their objective. If Rumania joined her partners of the Little Entente, the Bulgarians might attempt to recover the Dobruja. Under such circumstances, do you think that Germany would remain aloof? I don't. Then the Polish legions would be hurled against Germany's eastern border. Whereupon Lithuania would attempt to retake Vilna, which was filched from her by Poland. And the Ukrainians of Galicia would undoubtedly embrace the opportunity to rid themselves of the Polish yoke. The Belgians, of course, would march shoulder to shoulder with the French. The attitude of Greece and Turkey remains problematical, but there is little doubt that their sympathies would be with Italy rather than with France. And, once all Western Europe was engaged in a life-and-death struggle, it is scarcely conceivable that Russia would look on benevolently. Not only would the Communists have their golden chance, but every Russian, whether sympathetic with Communism or not, would shoulder a rifle with a determination to recover the territories wrested from Russia when she was torn by internal dissension. The truth is that the whole Euro-

pean structure is as delicately poised as a house of cards. Let a single card be touched and the whole imposing structure will collapse. That is why I assert that Albania is Europe's greatest danger-spot, and that Europe's safety requires the maintenance of Albania's independence.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ITALIAN DIPLOMACY

It is frequently asserted that the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, constitutes the gravest danger to the peace of Europe. With this view I do not concur.

It must be realized, in the first place, that Mussolini's bellicose utterances and saber-rattlings should not be taken at their face value. They are largely for home consumption. In the second place, the fact should never be lost sight of that the Italian dictator, far from being as impetuous and hot-headed as he lets himself appear, is an exceedingly astute and able statesman. No one realizes better than he that Italy has everything to lose by a war and comparatively little to gain. A successful war would ruin an already impoverished country. An unsuccessful one would replace Fascism with Communism. Unless I misread Mussolini's character and intentions, or unless his hand is forced by events which no one can foresee, he plans to gain his ends in the field of diplomacy rather than on the field of battle.

And Italian diplomacy is of the very highest order. Consider what it has accomplished in half a decade.

Once he had welded and forged and tempered his people into a fighting blade, Mussolini, finding himself confronted at every turn by the opposition of the French bloc, set about the business of organizing a bloc of his own. He found materials ready to hand in the discontented and resentful nations—Germany, Russia, Lithuania, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey—which form a cordon across the breadth of Europe.

Italy offered Hungary a hard and fast alliance, and the Hungarians, discouraged, hopeless, despairing of obtaining a square deal from the League of Nations, eagerly embraced the opportunity of allying themselves with so powerful a neighbor. In case of a war between Italy and Yugoslavia it is scarcely conceivable that Hungary would remain neutral.

Immediately to the east of Yugoslavia lies Bulgaria, a virile and industrious nation, smarting under the injustices inflicted by the Treaty of St. Germain, which deprived the country of its outlet to the *Ægean*. Italy has not only supported Bulgaria's pleas for a revision of this pact by the League of Nations, but in the autumn of 1930 the daughter of King Victor Emmanuel married the Bulgarian king.

Several years ago Italian statesmen set themselves to

the task of detaching Rumania from the Little Entente. Though they have as yet failed to accomplish their object, there are numerous indications that Rumania is drawing sensibly nearer to Rome and away from Paris.

Mussolini realized that, in the event of a conflict with France and Yugoslavia, there must be a corridor through which German coal, iron and other supplies could pour uninterruptedly into Italy. Austria constitutes such a corridor, so Mussolini set about winning her friendship by abandoning the repressive measures which had antagonized the Austrians of South Tyrol. The new policy appears to be meeting with considerable success, for when I revisited that region recently I was struck by the marked improvement in the relations between the Italian officials and the Austro-German inhabitants.

Italy is working unremittingly with the object of attracting Turkey and Greece definitely within the orbit of her political influence, as she has already done with Hungary and Bulgaria. In this she has heretofore been hindered by France, which has also been seeking to win the friendship of Angora and Athens. In Turkey's case, however, the Italians have a decided advantage over their French rivals, for Turkey is dissatisfied with the peace treaties, the revision of which is opposed by France and supported by Italy.

Further evidence of the intense activity of Italian diplomacy in the Balkans and Western Asia, which Mussolini recently described as the only regions toward which Italy can look for expansion, was provided by the ceremonial visit to Rome in the autumn of 1930 of the Turkish Foreign Minister. The ostensible reason for the visit was to render thanks to Mussolini for his services in bringing about a rapprochement between Greece and Turkey, the reconciliation of these traditional enemies having recently been signalized by the visit of M. Venizelos to Mustapha Kemal at Angora, where the Greek premier was greeted with tumultuous enthusiasm.

This meeting, held under Mussolini's auspices, has resulted in treaties of friendship between Turkey and Greece, Greece and Italy, and Italy and Turkey. But there is an apparently well-founded belief in political circles that the Duce is planning a closer association between Italy, Turkey and Greece than that represented by treaties of friendship. Certain it is that in the Ægean countries the diplomatic methods of the Palazzo Chigi have triumphed over those of the Quai d'Orsay.

The strongest cards in the pack are, of course, Russia and Germany, but it remains to be seen whether Italy will draw them. As regards Russia, it is generally believed that at the meeting held at Milan in November,

1930, between the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov, and the Italian Foreign Minister, Dino Grandi, the governments at Moscow and Rome came to a secret understanding. At about the same time Italy offered her support to Germany, but the Berlin government manifested some reluctance to enter into such a combination. Since then the ardor of the Italians for an alliance with Germany has somewhat cooled, due, it is said, to France having made her consent to a naval holiday and a loan to Italy contingent on Rome ceasing its flirtations with Berlin. It is highly significant, however, that at the last meeting of the Preparatory Disarmament Conference, Italy, Germany, Russia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey consistently voted together.

It is, of course, impossible to predict what effect the Franco-Italian naval accord may have on the general European situation. Leaving aside such considerations, however, the situation may be summed up, broadly speaking, as follows:

Europe is divided into two hostile camps. Gathered in one are France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania. All are armed to the teeth and bound together by military alliances. Their aims are identical: to keep their late enemies permanently enfeebled by resisting any attempts at revision of the peace treaties. These five



*Acme Newspictures*

IL DUCE AND MARE NOSTRUM

nations form a solid bloc, and, come what will, they may be depended upon to stick together.

The Italian bloc is in such a formative stage that I employ the term only because no better one presents itself. Should the plans of the government at Rome be completely realized, however, the Italian bloc would eventually comprise Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, all insistent on treaty revision; and, in addition, Russia, Lithuania, Albania and Greece, all hostile to France and her satellites for various reasons.

It must be admitted that this picture which I have drawn of the European situation is not an encouraging one, yet, barring some unforeseen incident, such as trouble over Albania, an armed clash between the two factions is a rather remote contingency. For France and her allies are very strong, whereas all the countries which Italy counts on, and for that matter Italy herself, are involved in economic difficulties which would make the prosecution of a prolonged war out of the question for some time to come. But there are victories of peace as well as of war, and when she sits down at the council table in Geneva Italy will hold a very strong hand.

It must be evident to every thoughtful person, however, that the present situation cannot continue indefinitely. Europe cannot remain divided into two armed

camps forever. Today, despite the enforced disarmament of the Central Powers and the promises of disarmament made by the others, the standing armies of Europe total at least half a million more men than they did in 1914. In its present state Europe is as loaded with potential danger as a tin of nitroglycerine.

The capitalists, the bankers and the bond-holders, the professional diplomats and treaty-makers, the pacifists, propagandists and politicians, all profess to believe that this perilous situation can be perpetuated, that the conquerors can remain in power and that the conquered can be kept in subjection by threats of force or economic reprisals. Such a policy is selfish, shortsighted, and will prove suicidal in the long run. So long as it is persisted in, so long as there is no sincere attempt to redress injustices or right wrongs, so long will Europe be the prey of jealousy, hatred, suspicion and fear. And from these it is only a short step to war.

## CHAPTER XIV

### AUSTRIA, GERMANY AND ITALY

*They see nothing wrong in the rule that to the victors belong the spoils. . . .*

William J. Marcy in the United States Senate, 1832.

BEFORE Congress, on February 11, 1918, President Wilson, in enunciating the war aims of the allied and associated powers, solemnly declared that "peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were chattels or pawns in a game."

On July 4 of the same year the President further declared that the ends for which we were fighting included "the settlement of every question, whether of territory or of sovereignty, of economic arrangement or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned."

In those two declarations the President voiced the sentiments of all the people of the United States and they were unctuously subscribed to by our European allies. But, once the war was won, they were treated as

contemptuously as the German chancellor treated the Belgian "scrap of paper." Had those pledges been respected the map of Europe would not be the political and ethnological crazy-quilt it is today and the statesmen and peoples of Europe would be sleeping more soundly o' nights.

The truth is that President Wilson was outplayed in every hand of the game. It was a case of an amateur putting himself against professionals—and none too scrupulous professionals at that. When they needed a card they could always produce it from a sleeve or the bottom of the pack. That their American opponent was playing the game fairly, that he was transparently sincere, imbued with the loftiest ideals, served only to make him an easier victim. Speculations are futile, yet it is interesting to conjecture what would have happened at Versailles had the President and his party of yes-men remained at home and the United States had been represented at the Peace Conference by such experienced, astute and resolute figures as Taft, Root and Hughes. This much may be said with certainty. Messrs. Clemenceau, Lloyd George *et al* would have more than met their match, the pledges to which they subscribed would have been observed, the peace treaties would have been

instruments of justice instead of greed and vindictiveness, and the Europe of today would be a safer and a happier place to live in.

It is my purpose, in this chapter, to show you what has happened in the Valley of the Danube, and what is likely to happen, as a result of the assurances of fair play given by President Wilson to our late enemies having been cynically disregarded by the European statesmen; to sketch for you in simple, everyday terms the perilous situation which has been brought about by a “settlement” which has settled nothing.

In order that my picture may have a proper background I beg that you will bear with me while I recall certain facts which you have perhaps forgotten.

By the Treaty of St. Germain Austria was deprived of 72 per cent of her territory and 75 per cent of her population—a dismemberment approached only by the partition of Poland. In the words of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the territory left to the newly formed republic “consists of some of the poorest and most mountainous areas of the former Austrian Empire . . . only about one-third is under cultivation; another third is covered with forest, and the remainder is largely mountainous.”

By the Treaty of Trianon Hungary lost 62 per cent of her Magyar population and 71 per cent of her territory. To again quote from the Britannica, "The Treaty took from Hungary all her gold, silver, copper, salt and mercury mines; all but one of her iron mines; her largest and best collieries; and 86 per cent of her forests."

By the Treaty of Neuilly Bulgaria, while losing only 3 per cent of her population, lost more than 12 per cent of her territory. On the north she was compelled to cede the greater part of the Dobruja to Rumania; on the west she ceded to Yugoslavia a strip of territory which brought the Bulgarian capital within range of Serbian guns; on the south she surrendered to Greece her Macedonian territory, including all access to the *Æ*gean. And the following year, at the Conference of San Remo, at which Bulgaria was not represented, she was ordered to hand over to Greece the whole of Western Thrace.

The beneficiaries of these wholesale dismemberments were, as everyone knows, the Czechs, whose chief service to the Allies consisted in their disloyalty to Austria; the Rumanians, who did not enter the war until it was half over and then met with a series of crushing defeats; the Serbs, who from the outset battled heroically but unsuccessfully against overwhelming odds; and the Italians. It will be seen, therefore, that

Italy alone can with any justification quote the maxim that “to the victors belong the spoils.”

The colossal amputations performed upon the defeated Danubian countries have placed upward of five and a quarter million Germans (that is, Austrian Germans), nearly three million Magyars, and not far from a million Bulgarians under alien rule. And, mind you, these nine million-odd human beings were not consulted as to their fate. Their sentiments were no more considered than those of the negroes who were “sold down river” in slavery days. Save in a few insignificant instances they were not permitted to express their desires by plebiscite. On the contrary, and in direct defiance of American pledges, they were “bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were chattels or pawns in a game.”

Nor did the troubles of these unhappy chattels end with their enforced change of nationality. Under their new rulers many of them have been subjected to tyranny and oppression compared with which the British treatment of the American colonists was considerate and generous. Moreover, the small areas left to Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, with a combined population of about twenty millions, have been so completely stripped of their natural resources, so hemmed in by economic

and political barriers, so effectually cut off from access to outside markets, that the most these people have to look forward to is a struggle for bare existence.

As a result of this unjust and unintelligent "settlement" we find today in the basin of the Danube, that mighty waterway which is Europe's Mississippi, close to thirty millions of Austro-Germans, Magyars and Bulgarians who, impoverished, oppressed and discouraged, are sullenly biding their time. They have nothing to lose by upsetting the present order of things and everything to gain. It would seem that even the selfish and shortsighted European statesmen would realize the danger of leaving such a cancer gnawing at Europe's very intestines.

To overawe their disarmed but resentful neighbors, and to keep their own huge minorities in subjection, the beneficiary nations have become armed camps, with large garrisons everywhere, their frontiers strung with barbed wire, patrolled by soldiery and sprinkled with machine guns. Of course they vehemently deny every imputation that they are nervous or that danger threatens. But why, then, it may pertinently be asked, do Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia deem it necessary to their security to keep nearly 600,000 men under arms?

Now, the situation would be sufficiently alarming if only the six Danubian nations directly concerned were involved. But it became one of positive peril when, as I pointed out in the preceding chapter, two of the great powers, Italy and France, began utilizing these smaller countries as pawns in the desperate game they are playing with the overlordship of Southeastern Europe as the stake.

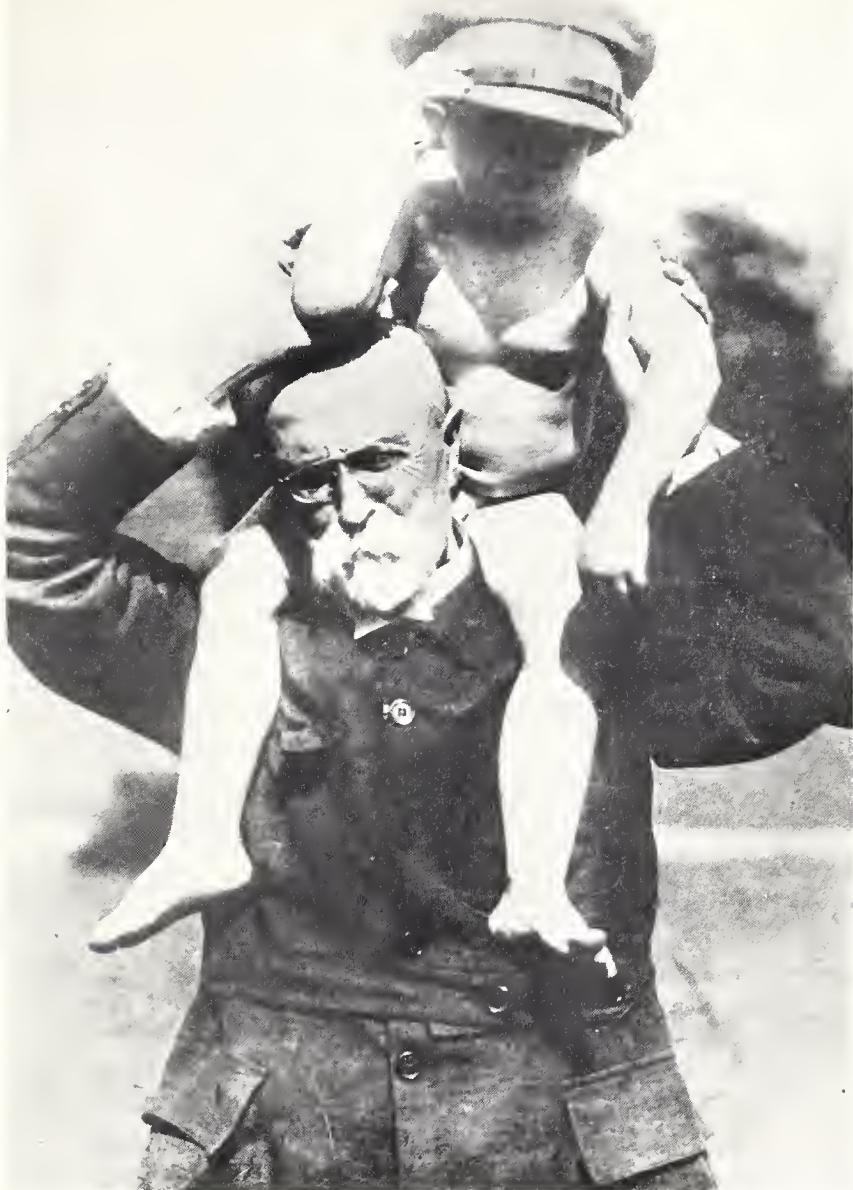
Italy has shrewdly turned to her own account the discontent which smolders in Central Europe. She has not only encouraged the governments of the defeated nations to press for a revision of the peace treaties on the plea that even the vanquished are entitled to justice, but she has come out openly as their champion before the League of Nations. In this, it is hardly necessary to remark, Italy is not actuated by altruism. She is methodically preparing herself for a titanic struggle—not necessarily an armed one—with France for the political hegemony of Southeastern Europe, and in Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, all with grievances for which they can obtain no redress, she sees useful weapons ready to hand.

But the whole foreign policy of France is based on the dictum that the peace treaties, no matter how unjust or how unworkable, must not be altered by the dot-

ting of an i or the crossing of a t. And in this she is whole-heartedly supported by Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia, all three of which will naturally resist to the utmost any attempt at treaty revision. French statesmanship unquestionably realizes the grave peril inherent in the Danubian situation and it probably would not be averse to allaying that peril by minor concessions were no other issues involved. But France realizes that in the event of another conflict with Germany—or a conflict with Italy—she must be able to rely unreservedly on the armed support of the Little Entente. And she can be certain of such support only if she remains unwavering in her opposition to any revision of the treaties. It will be seen, therefore, that whereas Italian policy is inspired by ambition, French policy is inspired by fear.

There you have the gist of the whole Danubian question—a question which has bedeviled and perplexed the League of Nations; which has turned all Southeastern Europe into a hot-bed of animosity, resentment, suspicion and fear; and which, if an intelligent and reasonably fair solution is not soon found, may well bring on another war.

Mark you, now, I am far from maintaining that there should have been no territorial adjustments after the



*Acme Newspictures*

**THOMAS GARRIGUE MASARYK, PRESIDENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

If the Czech chauvinists would permit this sagacious and kindly disposed old gentleman to have his way, he would inaugurate in the Danube country an era of reconciliation and good-feeling

Great War. The Czechs, the Rumanians and the Yugoslavs were perfectly justified in demanding that those sections of their peoples who had been for centuries under foreign domination should be restored to their respective motherlands. That was right and proper. And I am equally willing to admit the impossibility of drawing boundaries which would have accomplished this without inflicting certain hardships and injustices on the peoples concerned, for in many cases the populations are inextricably intermixed. The point I am trying to make, rather, is that the present frontiers were fixed on no principle—ethnic, economic, geographic, political, or of equity—which would make for permanence or security. On the contrary, they were dictated in the main by animosity, vindictiveness, chauvinism and greed.

The unintelligent manner in which the new boundaries were drawn has resulted, as might have been expected, in gross abuses and enormous economic difficulties. Let me illustrate this with a few examples, insignificant in themselves but highly illuminating.

By the Treaty of St. Germain Italy was awarded that portion of the Austrian Tyrol now known as the Upper Adige for no other reason than because the Italians demanded a stronger strategic frontier and because their

fellow allies were not in a position to deny it to them. There could be no claim to it on ethnic grounds, for the population was overwhelmingly Teutonic: 215,000 Austro-Germans and only 22,000 Italians.

Notwithstanding the repeated assurances of the Italian government that the racial culture of these unwilling subjects would be protected, their treatment soon became oppressive. A small but illuminating incident is that of the confiscation without compensation of the entire property of the Austrian Alpine clubs in the new Italian territory. The Tyroleans protested vehemently, but, Italy having refused to sign a minority treaty as being beneath her dignity, the League of Nations was powerless and the severity of Italian rule increased as Mussolini developed his power. That this severity has been noticeably relaxed of late, and that the Italian officials have adopted a policy of conciliation in their relations with the Tyroleans, is not due, I suspect, to any softening of the Italian heart, but rather to Mussolini's recognition of the fact that Austrian friendship is indispensable if he is to succeed in his scheme of organizing an anti-French bloc.

A glance at the map will show you why the friendship of even so small and enfeebled a country as Austria is essential to the realization of Mussolini's plans. For

you will note that the Austrian Tyrol forms a wedge between Italy and Germany. In the event of war Italy would have to depend upon Germany for her coal and iron—and the most direct and practicable route for the German coal and ore trains would be across the Tyrol and over the Brenner Pass. It will be obvious, therefore, that, with an unfriendly Austria athwart this vital line of supply, Italy would find herself in a most difficult and dangerous position.

Despite Italy's attempts to win over Austria, the attitude of the Vienna government has been one of absolute neutrality. For the country's need of foreign financial assistance makes an alliance with either Italy or France out of the question. If Vienna plays with Rome she will be unable to obtain from Paris much-needed loans, and if she coquettes with Paris she will only increase the difficulties of the 200,000 Austrians of South Tyrol who are under Italian rule. Austria, moreover, has little to expect from a revision of the peace treaties. Such of her former territories as were inhabited by Germans went mostly to Czechoslovakia, and the eyes of these Germans are turned not toward Vienna but toward Berlin. Indeed, the only gains which Austria could expect from a revision of the treaties would be an insignificant area near Marburg, now held by Yugo-

slavia, and a possible restoration of a portion of South Tyrol, whose Austrian inhabitants, curiously enough, are held in subjection by the very country which champions a revision of the frontiers.

It is worthy of remark that during the past two or three years there has been little talk of Austro-German *anschluss*. The Austrians, it may be presumed, are as eager as ever for union with their great Teutonic neighbor, but Germany, not yet ready to face the possible consequences of such a step, is biding her time. Many Germans feel that, in view of Austria's pronounced tendencies toward Socialism, the addition to the Reich of six and a half million Austrians would be more of a liability than an asset. Others, on the contrary, maintain that, as Austria is solidly Roman Catholic, *anschluss* would result in strengthening the German clerical party at the expense of the center and the left. France remains firmly opposed to any suggestion of *anschluss* not only because she is fearful of anything which might strengthen Germany, but also because she is bound by treaty to support Czechoslovakia—and the Czechs are constantly haunted by the nightmare of an Austro-German union. Just where Italy stands is not clear. She has nothing to fear—save possibly in South

Tyrol—from a union of the two Teutonic nations, and, should she succeed in effecting a hard-and-fast alliance with Germany she might deem it advantageous to have the frontiers of her ally coterminous with her own.

Late in March, 1931, however, Europe was startled and certain of the European chancelleries thrown into a state of alarm by an announcement that the governments at Vienna and Berlin had effected arrangements preliminary to the establishment of an Austro-German customs union. The announcement emphasized the fact that this *zollverein* was along the lines of the all-European customs union planned by the French foreign minister, Aristide Briand, and that other countries were invited to join.

According to the published terms, the independence of each country remains unimpaired; each is to maintain its own tariff administration; each retains the right to make trade agreements with outside states as long as they do not adversely affect the other partner; and disputes are to be settled by a court of arbitration on which both countries have equal representation. The existing tariff barriers between Germany and Austria are to be abolished; tariffs on imports from other countries are to be regulated jointly; and the total customs receipts

of the two partners are to be pooled and divided proportionately on a basis yet to be decided upon.

No secret is made of the fact that the Austro-German *zollverein* is only the first step in a far greater scheme which envisages bringing other agrarian states, such as Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, and possibly Italy into the union. That is, however, a matter for the future.

In Paris, Warsaw and Prague the announcement of the formation of the customs union between the two Teutonic nations was interpreted as the first move toward *anschluss*—that is, political union—and, as a consequence, caused great consternation. In those capitals it was loudly proclaimed that it was nothing less than a bold attempt to circumvent the provisions of the treaties of Versailles and St. Germain and of the convention concluded at Geneva in 1923, when Austria obtained a loan from the League of Nations.

Let me remark at this point that *anschluss* is *not* forbidden by the peace pacts. Article 80 of the Treaty of Versailles and Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain merely stipulate that Germany and Austria shall not effect a political union until the consent of the League of Nations has been obtained. It seemed to those who

framed these articles that they provided ample safeguards against *anschluss*, but in recent years the complexion of the League has undergone a marked change, France and her satellites no longer being able to dictate the decisions of the Geneva tribunal. But all that is beside the point, at least for the time being. The Austro-German customs union may be a step toward a political union, but they are certainly not one and the same thing.

The argument has also been advanced that this customs union would contravene the most favored nation clauses of the commercial treaties which Germany and Austria have made with other countries. According to international precedent, however, a customs union is not tantamount to granting special commercial favors at the expense of other nations. The truth is that the project has been so shrewdly framed and so skillfully handled that it seems likely to evade all objections based on purely legal grounds.

The move has placed the war victors in a most equivocal and embarrassing position. In the peace treaties, as in the Geneva convention of 1923, the "independence" of Austria was not only emphasized but insisted upon. If Austria really is an independent state, then she has a perfect right to enter into a customs union with whatso-

ever nation she pleases. Had she effected such a union with Poland, say, or Czechoslovakia, or Italy, there would have been no objections. The objections are due to the fact that she has made the arrangement with Germany. That other nations have been invited to join the union does not ease the situation, for France, Poland and Czechoslovakia have not the slightest desire to join, whereas the other two members of the French bloc, Yugoslavia and Rumania, may well decide that it is to their advantage to do so. Hungary and Bulgaria may be counted upon to lend their support to the scheme, and it is entirely conceivable that Italy, seeing in such a union of the Central European states a threat to France's domination of the continent, might come in.

France is further embarrassed by the fact that her own foreign minister, Briand, has long been working on a similar scheme. How, then, it may be asked, can the Quai d'Orsay consistently oppose an Austro-German union, so long as other nations are free to join, and continue to support the Briand plan?

There is one significant difference, however, between the French and German plans. M. Briand has insisted all along on placing political considerations before economic ones. Determined that the defeated nations should obtain no political advantages from his proposed

all-European customs union, he has argued that there must be treaties and agreements defining the exact political status of the member-states before there could be practical financial arrangements. Hence, though everyone applauded his earnestness and enthusiasm, nothing tangible had been accomplished when suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, came the announcement that Germany and Austria, becoming tired of waiting, had taken a leaf from the Briand book by deciding to raze the tariff wall between them.

It is a bold step that Germany and Austria have taken, but there is little doubt that it will prove a wise and mutually profitable one. It should, moreover, provide a useful object-lesson for other countries timidly hiding behind the tariff walls which they have stupidly erected and which have brought the agrarian states within measurable distance of economic ruin. That the announcement has caused grave misgivings in certain quarters is not at all surprising. They remember how the old *zollverein* between the separate German states was a preliminary to the formation of the German Empire. The question is, however, whether the fears and suspicions of France and her allies can be permitted longer to retard the economic recovery of the rest of Europe. To forbid a customs union between Germany

and Austria on the ground that it might lead to a political union would be equivalent to a police department forbidding citizens to carry canes for fear that they might be used as weapons.

## CHAPTER XV

### HUNGARY

By the Treaty of Trianon nearly three million Magyars, as people of the original Hungarian stock are known, were handed over to Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia. The boundaries thus arbitrarily imposed have worked great economic hardships on the Hungarians and have led to interminable dissensions between the governments concerned. Let me show you, by means of concrete examples, how this wholesale transfer of human beings from sovereignty to sovereignty has worked out.

Consider the case of the miners of Salgo Tarjan. The town in which they live is now in Czechoslovakia, whereas the entrances to the mines in which they earn their living remain on the Hungarian side of the line. So every morning when they go to work they have to present their passports, duly visaed, to two sets of frontier officials, and they have to repeat the performance every evening when they go home. Imagine the same

rule applied to every person who lives in Brooklyn or Jersey City but works in Manhattan!

At another point on the same frontier is found a similar case in point. Here the arbitrarily drawn boundary separates a farming community from the fields where the farmers pasture their cattle. So—believe it or not—every cow has to have a passport! The numbers on these bovine passports must correspond with the numbers burned on the animal's hoofs. It is the duty of the frontier guards to see that a cow is turned back if its papers are not in order. Should a calf be born on the Czech side of the line its Hungarian owner could obtain possession of it, I assume, only by an appeal to the League of Nations.

Another illuminating case is provided by Pécs and Szeged, in the south of Hungary. Pécs has coal, and Szeged, an important industrial city, has factories which require coal. The distance by railway between the two places is only about eighty miles, but the railway twice crosses the Yugoslav-Hungarian frontier, so that coal sent by that route would have to pay an import duty each time. The only way, therefore, for the Szeged factories to obtain Pécs coal is via Budapest, which entails a detour of something over five hundred miles. To again employ an American parallel, it is as though



Keystone

ADMIRAL NICHOLAS HORTHY DE NAGYBANYA

The fighting sailor who rules Hungary as regent pending the election of a king

Scranton coal, in order to reach Philadelphia, had to be shipped via Buffalo.

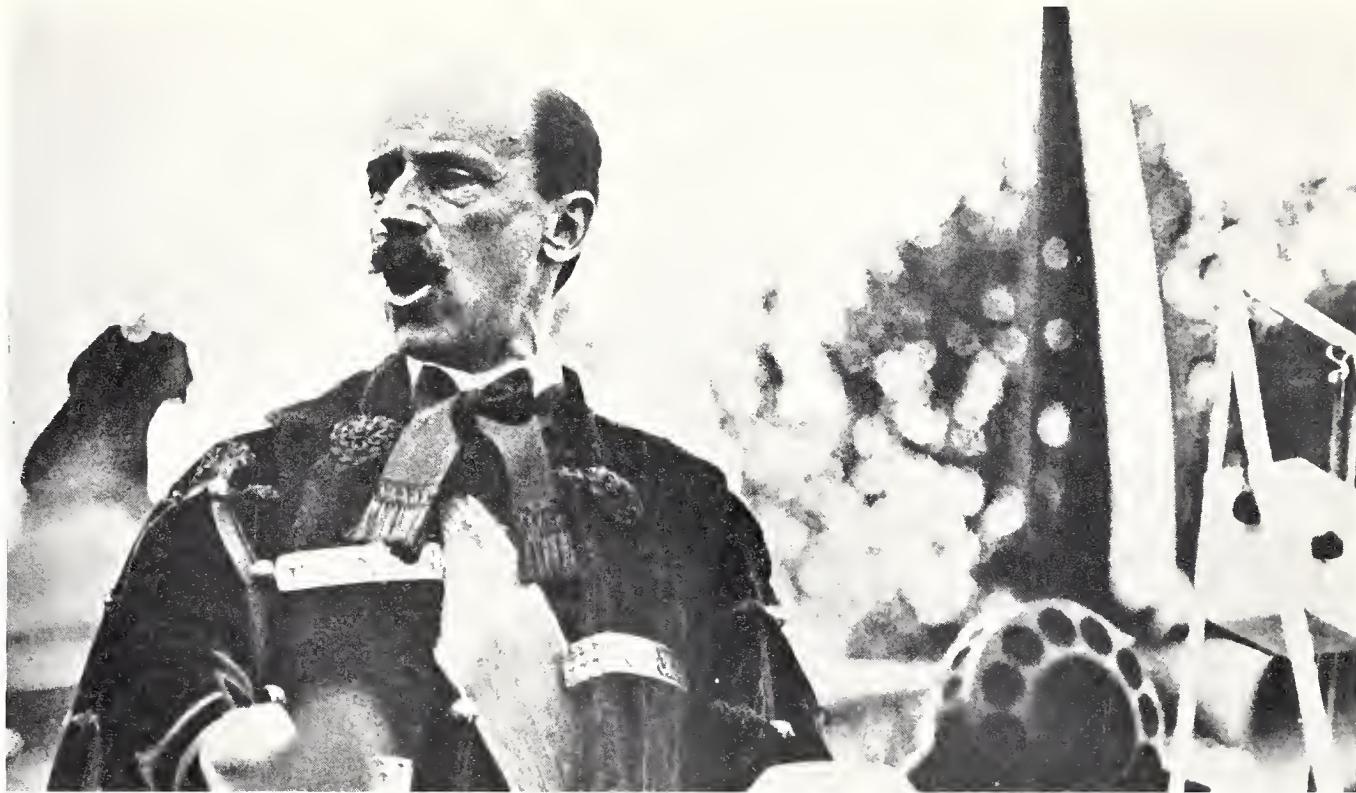
Despite the denials of the Hungarian premier, Count Bethlen, it is now generally admitted in European political circles that there exists between Hungary and Italy a secret understanding which is a hard-and-fast military alliance in pretty much everything save name. The details of this alliance have been shrouded in mystery, but it is commonly believed that in the event of war Italy and Hungary would stand shoulder to shoulder.

No country of pre-war Europe was more happily situated economically than Hungary. She was singularly self-contained, for the people of the plains sold their grain and coal to the inhabitants of the mountains and the latter found a market for their timber in the cities of the plains. But by the Treaty of Trianon Hungary was stripped of virtually all her mines and forests, about all that was left to her being her wheat-lands. It being obviously impossible for her to achieve any considerable degree of prosperity from agriculture alone, she is faced by the necessity of developing her manufacturing industries—a discouraging task with such scanty natural resources as she has been permitted to retain. Her difficulties have been enormously increased,

moreover, by the policy of the Little Entente nations in raising tariff barriers which completely hem her in.

That, in spite of these obstacles, she has made undeniable economic progress, has stabilized her currency, and is in a sounder financial condition than any other Danubian nation, speaks volumes for Hungarian energy and determination. Cross the frontier from Czechoslovakia, from Rumania or from Yugoslavia into Hungary and you cannot but be struck by the abrupt change in the appearance of the countryside—the excellent roads, the trim villages, the well-kept farms. The answer is, of course, that the Little Entente countries are spending far more than they can afford on armaments, whereas Hungary, with only a modest military establishment to maintain, is free to devote her resources to the economic development of the kingdom. As a consequence, the Hungarian pengo is at par and Hungarian credit is sound.

Though fair-minded men admit that Hungary has not had a square deal, that many of her grievances rest on a solid foundation, no steps have been taken to adjust them, and this in spite of repeated appeals to the League of Nations. That is why the Hungarians, hopeless of obtaining redress, so eagerly embraced the alliance offered them by Italy. With the encouraging words



*Acme Newspictures*

**COUNT STEPHEN BETHLEN**

No statesman in Europe occupies a more trying position than the Premier of Hungary

of Mussolini ringing in their ears, the mental outlook of the Hungarians has completely changed. Born fighting men, they hear once more the tramp of armies and the roll of drums.

This is due wholly to the shortsightedness of the policy pursued by the governments of the Little Entente and their coadjutor, France. By their persistent refusal to redress Hungary's just grievances, by steadfastly opposing any consideration of her appeals by the League of Nations, they have thrown her into the arms of Italy, thereby immeasurably increasing the danger of the Danubian situation. Had they adopted in their dealings with Hungary a policy of justice and conciliation, it is safe to say that Hungary would have refrained from entering into a military alliance with Italy, and, as a consequence, the frontiers of the Little Entente would be far more secure today. By deliberately embittering the Hungarians, however, they have provided Italy with a cornerstone for a system of alliances which may end by plunging Europe into another war. Almost any group of American business men, by applying the principles of common sense, could have handled the problem more successfully than the professional politicians—they do not deserve the name of statesmen—who are responsible for the present perilous situation.

One of the grievances of the Hungarians is that the Little Entente will not permit them to choose their own ruler, provided that ruler is a Habsburg. A great number of Hungarians—probably the majority—regard the youthful Archduke Otto, the eldest son of the late Emperor Charles and the Empress Zita, as their rightful king. Whether, if it came to a vote, Otto would be given the crown is, however, open to some question. Many Hungarians, though loyal to the monarchy, do not believe in swopping horses while crossing a stream. What exasperates and infuriates the Hungarians is that they, ostensibly a sovereign people, should not be permitted to have Otto for their king if they decide that they want him. Rumania and Yugoslavia, I suspect, are not adamantine in their opposition to a Habsburg restoration, but the Czech Foreign Minister, Eduard Beneš, has threatened Hungary with invasion should Otto be called to the throne. “Are we a free people,” ask the Hungarians, “with a right to choose whom we please as our ruler, or are we merely vassals who must do Czechoslovakia’s bidding?”

My own opinion is that it would be vastly better for the peace of Europe to let the Hungarians have young Otto for their king if they want him. Perhaps, given their choice, they would decide against him. Or what

matter if they did choose him? There is something akin to the ridiculous in the spectacle of three nations, with standing armies aggregating 600,000 men, becoming hysterical at the possibility of the Hungarians choosing as their ruler a lad still in his teens.

According to Hungarian law Otto came of age in the autumn of 1930, when his eighteenth birthday was celebrated by the royalists with great rejoicings. An extremely handsome youngster, highly intelligent and with singularly winning manners, he has been brought up by his mother, the former Empress Zita, in almost Spartan simplicity. Not so much from choice as from sheer necessity, for the royal family are in such straitened circumstances as to verge on poverty. During the greater part of the year the former Empress and her children occupy a small château not far from Brussels and Otto attends the University of Louvain. The summer months are spent at a modest villa, loaned them by King Alfonso, at Lequeitio, on the north coast of Spain.

Zita is the most devout of Catholics and, as a consequence, Otto has been brought up under the close supervision of the Church. Many of his supporters believe, however, that the time has come when he should break away from priestly influence and obtain the broad vision necessary for a modern sovereign by attending

one of the great English universities—Oxford or Cambridge. But thus far, the Empress has strongly opposed such a course and in her opposition she has been supported by the Vatican. There is no doubt that the influence exercised by the Empress is reactionary, that she dreams of another Habsburg empire, and that, were her counsels to prevail, the governments of the Little Entente would have some justification for their alarm. But those who know him best tell me that Otto is a lad of altogether exceptional balance and common sense, fully alive to the fact that the old order of things has passed forever.

All save the most fanatical royalists are of the opinion that the present is an inauspicious time for Otto to make an active attempt to gain the throne, and that his chances of eventually becoming King of Hungary—which, by the way, is the style in which he is addressed by his supporters—will be increased rather than diminished by waiting for a few years. Meanwhile, he enjoys the advice of three exceedingly astute statesmen—Count Albert Apponyi, the “Grand Old Man” of Hungary; Benito Mussolini and Pius XI.

In my opinion, the greatest single obstacle to the stabilization of political and economic conditions in the Danube Basin is the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister,



*W. W. Photos*

#### HE KEEPS THREE GOVERNMENTS ALARMED

For great numbers of Hungarians regard the youthful Archduke Otto of Habsburg, now a student at the University of Louvain, as their rightful king

Eduard Beneš, whose intransigence and vindictiveness have thus far blocked every step to effect a real reconciliation between the victors and the vanquished. As I have already remarked, he has threatened Hungary with invasion in the event of an attempt being made to place the young Archduke Otto on the throne of his fathers. He was instrumental in forbidding the Austrians to give their country the name they had chosen—the Austro-German Republic. By his influence in the League and at the Quai d'Orsay he has thwarted every attempt to obtain boundary revisions. And he has repeatedly announced that under no circumstances will Germany be permitted to effect either a political or a customs union with Austria—apparently unmindful of the fact that there is something supremely ridiculous in the spectacle of a country the size of Czechoslovakia saying “You shall not” to seventy million Germans and Austrians. When, not long ago, that benevolent and sagacious old statesman, President Masaryk, intimated in a somewhat indiscreet interview that he was not averse to a reconsideration of the whole Danubian question, Beneš and his chauvinistic adherents hastened to impugn the accuracy of the interview, intimating that President Masaryk was getting old and should not be taken too seriously.

## CHAPTER XVI

### BULGARIA

THE fairest and most practical of all the pacts imposed on the defeated powers was, on the whole, the Treaty of Neuilly, with Bulgaria. As a result Bulgaria is more relatively prosperous than any other ex-enemy state and has been able to pay her liabilities without making the League her receiver and manager, like Austria and Hungary, or adopting a disguised form of this liquidation as Germany has done under the Dawes and Young plans. Which proves that fair dealing, even with a vanquished enemy, pays in dollars and cents in the long run.

Yet the Allies are not justified in patting themselves on the back over their generosity to Bulgaria. The Treaty of Neuilly explicitly promised Bulgaria an outlet to the *Ægean*, her entire littoral on that sea, including the port of Dedeagatch, having been handed over to Greece. The treaty likewise promised that the religious, educational and cultural rights of the Bulgarians placed under Greek, Rumanian or Yugoslav rule should be

respected. But both of these pledges, like so many others given by the victors, have been cynically ignored.

One has only to glance at the map to recognize how absolutely vital to Bulgaria's economic development is her possession of a free outlet to the *Æ*gean. For a brief period she had such an outlet in Dedeagatch, which in 1912 she took from Turkey but which she was compelled to cede to Greece seven years later. Since then she has had to depend upon the Black Sea ports of Burgas and Varna, but both of these are about four hundred miles from the *Æ*gean. Moreover, the route passes through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, which in the past have always been closed in time of war by the power in control, thus preventing any maritime trade between the Black Sea ports and the Mediterranean. Greece, it is true, has offered Bulgaria a free port on the *Æ*gean, but its freedom would be only nominal, for it would be under Greek sovereignty and the way to it would lie across Greek territory. To one who recalls the highly equivocal rôle played by Greece during the Great War, and the Allies' constant fear of Greek treachery, it seems rather astonishing that she should have been rewarded so generously at Bulgaria's expense, even to the extent of still withholding from Bulgaria the *Æ*gean outlet which had solemnly been promised her. That the League of

Nations has failed to make good this promise may be attributed to the persuasiveness of that exceedingly astute Greek statesman, M. Venizelos.

The question of an *Æ*gean outlet, important as it is economically, is of secondary political importance, however, to that of the treatment of the Bulgarian minorities in Yugoslavia, Greece and Rumania. The Bulgarians living in these three states, but more particularly in Yugoslavia, complain incessantly of the grossest injustice and oppression. They have been forbidden to use their own language in church or school, even at home or on the street. Their social clubs and literary societies have been proscribed. The singing of the Bulgarian anthem, the display of the Bulgarian flag, or even the wearing of the national colors of Bulgaria are offenses punishable by fine or imprisonment. The printing of books or newspapers in the Bulgarian language or their importation from outside is forbidden. Under Yugoslav rule in Macedonia and Greek rule in Thrace every effort has been made to stamp out the Bulgarian tongue and sense of nationality, all this, of course, in direct defiance of the minority clauses in the peace treaties.

Ever since the ringing appeal of Gladstone aroused a lethargic world to the appalling conditions existing in

Macedonia, that comparatively small region between the Rhodope Mountains and the Ægean has been a menace to the peace of Europe. After the first Balkan War in 1912 it was ceded by Turkey to Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, but as a result of the Great War Bulgaria lost the whole of her Macedonian territory, which was divided between Greece and Yugoslavia. But the boundaries imposed at Neuilly by no means settled the Macedonian question, for, though it is a comparatively simple matter to change frontiers, it is not so easy to change the national sentiments of populations. And in Macedonia, where three peoples—Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians—are inextricably scrambled, it is not merely a question of racial and political rivalries, but of religious hatreds.

No one, unless he has been in Macedonia—and I have been visiting that unhappy region off and on for thirty years—can have any conception of the savage hatred existing between the three peoples or the barbarism with which the Greeks and Serbs, now that they are in control, treat their Bulgarian subjects. It is a matter of common knowledge that the Serbian police have employed methods of torture which for sheer ferocity surpass those of the Spanish Inquisition. Reports made by neutral investigators of unimpeachable reputation provide horri-

fying reading. Conditions were certainly no worse—and in certain respects were probably somewhat better—during the Turkish régime.

“But,” I hear you say, “why don’t these oppressed minorities appeal to the League of Nations? That is what the League is for, isn’t it?” (Pardon my smiling.) No matter how Utopian the ideals of those who founded the League, how lofty their aims, it has not proved itself an agency for enforcing justice or righting wrongs. Small, weak nations in particular have learned that they have little to expect from it. Ask the Lithuanians, the Ukrainians, the Tyroleans, the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, the Albanians what the League has done for them. The truth is that the League has become, in effect, an instrument with which certain of the victors in the Great War purpose to keep the vanquished in a permanent state of inferiority and subjection. Thus, if Bulgaria appeals to Geneva on behalf of her oppressed nationals in Yugoslavia, any consideration of the appeal is instantly opposed by the Yugoslavs, and in this opposition they are warmly supported by their allies, the French, the Rumanians, the Czechs, and, of course, by the Greeks as well. It is a case, to put it vulgarly, of “I’ll scratch your back if you’ll scratch mine.”

Macedonia is far away and what happens there is to



*Underwood & Underwood*

**BORIS III, KING OF BULGARIA**

By his ability as a ruler he has improved his country's internal condition and by his marriage to a daughter of the King of Italy he has strengthened its international position

most of the world a matter of supreme indifference. But to Bulgaria, whose people are being mistreated, the settlement of the Macedonian question is of vital importance. Were the governments at Belgrade and Athens to put an end to the present reign of oppression in Macedonia, were they faithfully to observe the treaties which they have signed, it would tend to pacify public opinion in Bulgaria, it would facilitate Sophia's efforts to initiate and pursue a policy of reconciliation, and it would pave the way for the much discussed Balkan federation. But so long as conditions remain as they are, so long as the people of Bulgaria continue to hear the cries of distress from their brethren under alien rule, all talk of friendly feelings, normal relations and political and economic coöperation in the Balkans will be so much hypocritical babble.

Just as the indifference of the Allies and the League to Hungary's grievances brought about an alliance between Hungary and Italy, so their policy of ignoring Bulgaria's protests promises to bring about a Bulgarian-Italian alliance. Already Italy counts Bulgaria as one of her staunchest friends, though it is somewhat premature to assume that her understanding with Bulgaria is as unconditional as the one she has effected with Hungary. The political relations between Rome and Sophia

are admittedly very close, however, and they were materially strengthened by the marriage of King Boris to the daughter of the King of Italy.

Let me make it perfectly clear, however, that the Bulgarians have not the slightest desire to become involved in another war, for they were engaged in three between 1912 and 1918 and have no stomach for further fighting. That is why the government at Sophia, eager as it is for Italian support, regards anything in the nature of a hard-and-fast military alliance with Italy with considerable trepidation. But, if the oppression of the Bulgarian minorities is permitted to continue, if Bulgaria's protests are persistently ignored by the League of Nations, nothing is more certain than that an aroused public opinion will have its way and Bulgaria will definitely take its place in the bloc of dissatisfied nations which Italy is forming.

Bulgaria's demands are, after all, so moderate and so justified—the protection of the Bulgarian minorities and an outlet to the *Ægean* were both solemnly pledged to her, remember, by the Treaty of Neuilly—that it would appear to anyone save, perhaps, a Balkan politician, the part of good statesmanship and good sense to grant them without further opposition or procrastination. It would certainly seem that Yugoslavia, threatened on

## BULGARIA

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two fronts by the Italian-Hungarian alliance and none too certain of Greece's attitude, would recognize the wisdom of having a friendly, or at least a neutral, Bulgaria in her rear. True, Bulgaria is at present disarmed, but Italy could remedy that deficiency, and the 500,000 Bulgarian fighting men who could be put into the field might well prove a decisive factor were war again to break out in the Balkans.

## CHAPTER XVII

### YUGOSLAVIA

IN any consideration of the conditions existing in Yugoslavia the fact should not be lost sight of that that state has expanded too rapidly for its own good. Not until 1878 was Serbia—the cornerstone of the present kingdom—able to rid itself of the Turkish yoke. It doubled its population in the two Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 and it again more than doubled it when, upon the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, Croatia, Slovenia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Montenegro united with Serbia as the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In 1929 the name of the new state was changed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The population of Yugoslavia consists in the main of three branches of the South Slav race—the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes—with a considerable sprinkling of Magyars in the territories taken from Hungary and of Mohammedans in Bosnia. Though it is extremely difficult to obtain figures which can be relied upon, there seems little doubt that the Croats and Slovenes com-

bined outnumber the Serbs in the proportion of at least three to two.

In theory the consolidation of the South Slav peoples into a single kingdom was a logical and admirable thing. But theory and practice seldom walk hand in hand. For, though the three peoples are of the same racial stock, they are very far from having the same culture, the same religion, or the same political convictions. Thus, the Serbs use a modified form of the Cyrillic alphabet; the Croats and Slovenes the Latin. The Serbs belong to the Greek Orthodox Church; the Croats and Slovenes to the Roman Catholic. Taking the country as a whole the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics are probably about equal in numbers; the Mohammedans form 11 per cent of the total population.

The main difference between the eastern and western branches of the Yugoslav family is, however, a cultural one, the result of thirteen hundred years of separation. The western Yugoslavs, by which is meant the inhabitants of Croatia, Slovenia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, show the effects of the Latin and Germanic cultures by which they were influenced so long. A high degree of education prevails in these parts of the kingdom and they have produced literary men, painters, sculptors, and scientists of world-wide renown. The Serbs, on the other hand,

have until very recently been denied these cultural advantages, for they were Turkish vassals until about fifty years ago. Barring a few notable exceptions they are still a peasant people, for the most part small farmers, sturdy, stolid, crude of manner, largely illiterate, unprogressive, not particularly industrious, courageous, arrogant and warlike. The difference between the Serbs and the Croat-Slovenes is the difference between a Kentucky mountaineer and a substantial New England farmer.

It might be said, indeed, that the Save, long the frontier between Serbia and Croatia-Slovenia, still forms the dividing line between east and west. On the western side of that river lies a country of trim, well-kept farmsteads; of prosperous modern cities with universities, museums, art galleries, broad boulevards; of excellent railways and well-built roads. On the eastern side of the Save one finds squalid communities, but little improved since Turkish times, clusters of miserable huts, execrable roads, and one of the poorest and most backward populations in Europe. The breadth of the cultural gulf between the western and eastern Yugoslavs is strikingly illustrated by the contrast between the Croatian cities of Ljubljana and Zagreb and the Serbian cities of Skoplje and Nish. Only within the past few years has

the capital, Belgrade, begun to assume the appearance of a western city.

When the Croats and Slovenes consented to a union with the Serbs it was on the distinct understanding that it was to be an equal partnership, that they were to exercise the voice in government affairs to which their numbers entitled them. But they were quickly undeceived. The Serbs, become headstrong and arrogant from their huge accessions of territory and from the praise their bravery in the war had earned them, made it amply clear that in the new Yugoslav kingdom they proposed to hold the whip and reins. A Serbian king was placed on the Yugoslav throne. Most of the cabinet portfolios and other important positions in the government were given to Serbs. The army was completely under Serbian control, only Serbs being given commissions above the grade of colonel. The cities of Croatia and Slovenia were garrisoned by Serbian troops, many of them rude soldiery from the remote eastern provinces who could not even speak the language of the districts they occupied and who made no attempt to conceal their contempt for the inhabitants. The breach was still further widened by the intolerable arrogance of the Serbian officials, who treated the Croats and Slovenes as conquered peoples.

The resentment of the western Yugoslavs at this sort of treatment soon developed into open disaffection. Incidents of one sort and another were of almost daily occurrence, culminating with the assassination on the floor of the Skupshtina of Croatia's foremost political leader. For a time it looked as though the triune kingdom would be rent by civil war. By January, 1929, the internal condition of the country had become so grave that King Alexander declared himself dictator, abolished the constitution, dissolved the Skupshtina, and took into his own hands the executive power, which he exercised through a cabinet of his own appointing, choosing as his Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior a Serbian military man, General Petar Zivkovich. A few weeks later the king issued a decree constituting a Supreme Legislative Council of seventeen nominated members—eleven Serbs, four Croats and two Slovenes. In little more than a decade the constitutional monarchy, whose establishment had been hailed as a promise of a new order of things in the Balkans, had given way to a one-man dictatorship; the bayonet had been substituted for the ballot; democracy had been supplanted by despotism.

To the credit of the dictatorship must be recorded a certain amount of economic progress, and this in spite



Keystone

#### KING ALEXANDER OF YUGOSLAVIA

In order to avert civil war he has declared himself dictator, abolished the constitution, dissolved the Skupstina, and supplanted democracy by despotism

of the effects of the world agricultural crisis. Through the employment of new methods and the introduction of modern machinery the industries of the country have been speeded up. Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, and the Adriatic port of Spalato have increased in population. The railways have been extended and modernized. Several hundred new schools have been opened and a royal decree has made it compulsory for all illiterates up to the age of twenty-five to attend them. And, for the first time in the country's history, taxes are being collected, a fact which gives more satisfaction to the holders of Yugoslavian bonds than to the Yugoslavian peasantry.

Even such moderate progress as this entitles the dictatorship to credit, but whether it is worth the price is another question. For, despite the denials of government officials, despite the carefully staged demonstrations of loyalty, the fact remains that discontent, resentment and unrest permeate the country. The kingdom has become an armed camp, heavy forces of soldiery being held in readiness at strategic points to repress ruthlessly the first signs of open disaffection. Any attempts at reviving freedom of speech or of the press lead straight to prison. The army of spies with which the country is overrun makes social intercourse dangerous and encourages distrust and suspicion. The Serbian section of the

population resents the dictatorship as a denial of even the illusory liberty which the Serbs have enjoyed since Turkish times. The Croats and Slovenes, on the other hand, regard the dictatorship as a long stride toward the country's complete Serbianization.

Many competent observers are of the opinion that the dictatorship, far from achieving political stability, is serving to unite the democratic elements of both Serbia and Croatia-Slovenia against the king and may result in the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. Though the king is doubtless fully alive to this peril, yet he is not free to take the obvious step of restoring to the country its constitution and its parliament, for such action would be followed by a popular demand that those responsible for the injustices and hardships inflicted by the dictatorship should be punished. In other words, that the king should punish the very men who have abetted him in the dictatorship. To put it baldly, the king and his advisers have a particularly savage bear by the tail and do not dare let go.

Those who are running the dictatorship feel that they are reasonably safe, however, so long as they can count on the support of the army, which is apparently loyal to the king. But toward the close of 1930 there appeared in the European press a significant item to the effect

that a number of Yugoslav army officers of high rank, among whom was said to be the former Chief of Staff, had been arrested on the charge of being members of a political secret society, the League for Freedom and Justice, which had circulated a manifesto protesting against the dictatorship.

Perhaps no European sovereign, unless it be King Alfonso, is in as trying a position as the serious-minded, somewhat taciturn young man who sits on the throne of Yugoslavia. That King Alexander is sincerely devoted to his country is not open to question, but it is a matter for conjecture just how far he is prepared to go, or dares go, down the road of liberalism, for he is surrounded by Serbian chauvinists and fire-eaters and presumably is guided by their advice. For him to ignore the wishes of this military clique would be little short of suicidal, for Serbian army officers have never hesitated to assassinate those rulers who have opposed them. Perhaps I mis-judge the king, yet I believe that, were he permitted to yield to his own inclinations, he would favor any form of government which would assure permanent security and peace to his distracted country.

Whatever effect the dictatorship may ultimately have on the internal affairs of the country, it has certainly modified Yugoslavian belligerency toward other nations

—particularly Italy. For no one knows better than the king and his advisers that, in view of the highly disturbed political and economic conditions in the country, it would be insane to do anything which might bring on a foreign war. Despite the bellicose attitude of the Yugoslav militarists, the country wants peace, must have peace, and will go to almost any lengths to keep it.

For, as I have pointed out elsewhere, Yugoslavia, hemmed in by potential enemies, is in a perilous position from a military point of view. She counts heavily on French support in case of war, but there are those, even among the Yugoslavs themselves, who question whether, if it came down to brass tacks, this support would be more than moral and financial—whether it would run to fleets and armies. Here the matter ends, however, so far as alliances are concerned, for Yugoslavia's partners in the Little Entente, Rumania and Czechoslovakia, are in no way bound to come to her assistance against Italy. The Little Entente is aimed solely at Hungary.

But here arises an interesting question. What course would be followed by Rumania and Czechoslovakia should Hungary join Italy in a war against Yugoslavia? It is easy enough for the governments at Bucharest and Prague to talk lightly of imposing their will on a disarmed Hungary, but a Hungary allied to the great mili-

tary power across the Adriatic is quite another matter. My own opinion is—and you can take it for what it is worth—that rather than bring on a general European war, with certain ruin for everyone concerned, Rumania and Czechoslovakia would adopt an attitude of benevolent neutrality, so long as their own borders were not threatened.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### RUMANIA

I SHALL doubtless astonish most of my readers by expressing the conviction that one of the most hopeful indications of a new deal in the Danube country is found in the unexpectedly sane and conciliatory attitude of the errant King Carol of Rumania. This young man, as I am well aware, has been universally condemned abroad because of his philanderings. But they, after all, are beside the point. England has had few stronger or abler rulers than Henry VIII, none with deeper political insight than Edward VII, yet by no stretch of the imagination could either be termed a model husband.

That King Carol is immensely popular among his people is undeniable. During a recent motor journey through the length and breadth of Rumania everyone with whom I talked—officers, officials, shopkeepers, artisans, farmers—were enthusiastically for him. His escapades have not only appealed to the romanticism inherent in the Rumanian character, but the country has been so long and so abominably misgoverned, the peasantry have been so impoverished and oppressed by the corrupt

and unscrupulous politicians who were formerly in power, that Carol is looked upon as a savior by a people who were about ready to abandon hope.

A long and exceedingly frank conversation with this boyish, tousle-headed, worried-looking monarch who in the early summer of 1930 descended so dramatically on his native soil in an airplane, left me with the impression that he takes his job seriously and that he is genuinely anxious to give his country a just and honest administration. I found him fully alive to the difficulties and dangers of the complicated minority problem and eager to work out a solution which, while protecting Rumania's rights, would be fair to all concerned. In discussing Rumania's attitude toward her vanquished neighbors he was unexpectedly sympathetic, betraying none of the animosity and arrogance displayed by so many of the Danubian statesmen. His concern for the agricultural classes is very real, for he realizes that Rumania's only hope of stability and prosperity is in an immediate amelioration of their unhappy condition. He told me that many of the farmers, in order to obtain seed and agricultural implements, were compelled to borrow from private money-lenders at staggering rates of interest—in some cases as high as 40 per cent a year.

Carol made a long step in the right direction when he

unceremoniously swept from the board of Rumanian politics his mother, Queen Marie, and along with her the whole of the corrupt and reactionary clique which had dominated the country so long. What Carol would like to do, and what he will be permitted to do, are, of course, entirely different matters, but he is neither a reactionary nor a chauvinist; the years he spent in foreign exile gave him a fairer and more sympathetic perspective of the whole Danubian situation; and I am willing to hazard the prophecy that, if he can make his own choice, this young man with the lurid past will give Rumania a more just and liberal régime than it has ever known.

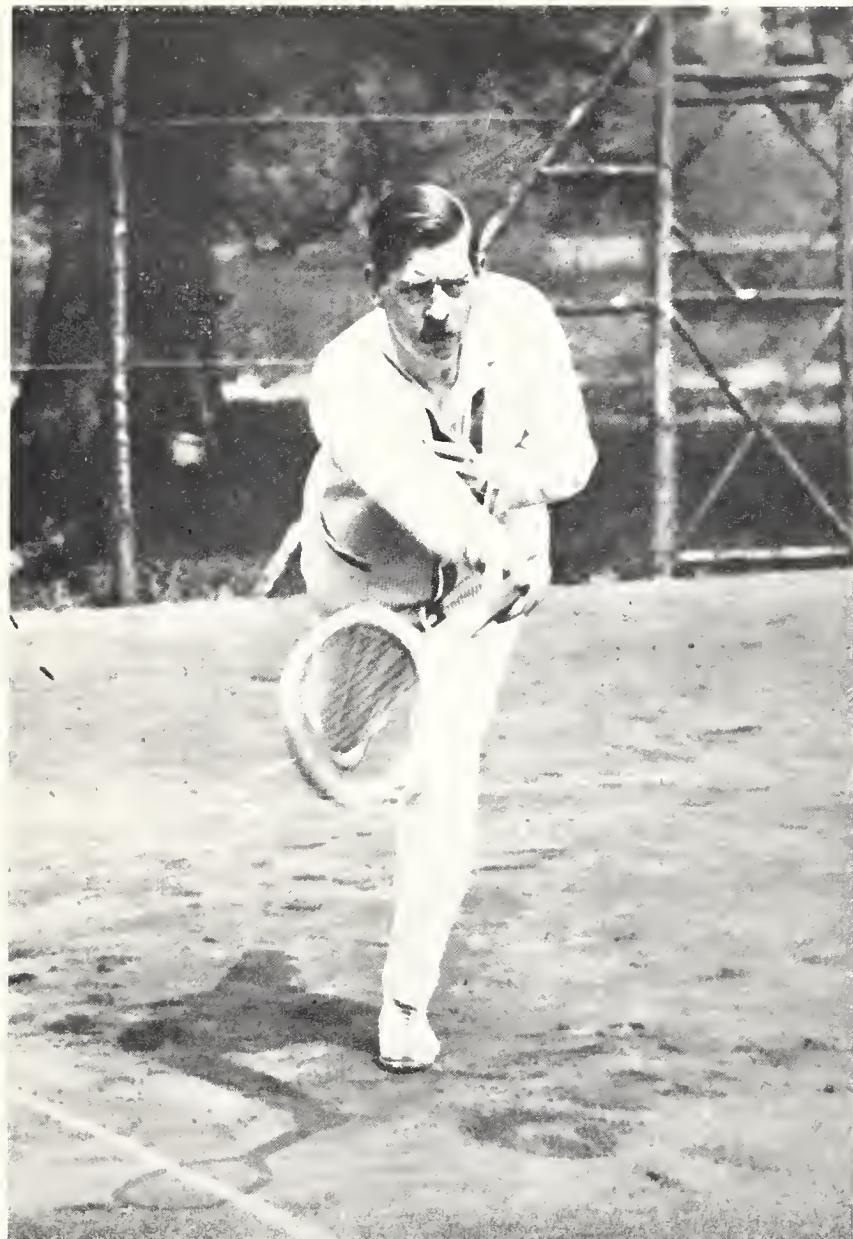
Despite the acuteness of the economic depression, it struck me that Rumania had undergone a marked change for the better in the two years since I had been there. This change was apparent upon crossing the frontier, where the former brusqueness, incivility and suspicion of the police and customs officials have been replaced by courtesy and consideration. The spies who infested the country until quite recently, and who by their obnoxious methods exasperated foreigners and made travel in Rumania a series of constant irritations, have disappeared. At least I saw no signs of them. With the iron hand of the Bratianu dictatorship and of the

regency removed there is again freedom of speech and of the press. Though Rumania maintains a large army in proportion to its size—185,000 officers and men—the country does not give the appearance of being in a state of military occupation, as is the case in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The roads are still in an abominable condition—though I was told that a contract has been let for the construction of a concrete highway right across the country from the Hungarian frontier to the Danube—but the railways have been improved and the railway service is, on the whole, excellent. Bucharest has been transformed in the space of a few years from a characterless and none too clean town to an up-to-date capital, with broad, well-paved thoroughfares, modern hotels, and substantial buildings.

But the most noticeable change, as it is the most significant and encouraging, is in the outlook of the people themselves, particularly in those parts of the country which formerly belonged to Hungary. In Transylvania especially I made it a point to talk with the inhabitants whenever an opportunity offered. Even among the Magyars, who have no love for the Rumanians, there appeared to be a growing willingness to accept the situation philosophically, to make the best of things as they are.

Sympathetic as I am with the Hungarians, and appreciative as I am of the territorial losses and political injustices they have suffered, I must confess that I could find few evidences of the Hungarian minorities in Rumania being subjected to injustice and oppression. Their lot at one period was a very hard one—that cannot be denied—but their treatment has altered for the better and the Rumanian government now seems to be making a sincere attempt to gain the good will and coöperation of its new subjects by dealing fairly with them.

I suppose that I shall grievously disappoint many Hungarians whose friendship I value highly by remarking that my observations led me to the conclusion that the complaints of the Hungarian minority in Rumania, of which one hears so much in Budapest, do not emanate from the peasantry, who seem to be adjusting themselves to the new order of things. They come, rather, from the comparatively small but highly articulate group of Transylvanian land-owners of the upper class who have been dispossessed of large slices of their property for distribution among the peasants. The expropriations of property carried out in accordance with the new agrarian laws have certainly not always been characterized by fairness, and have worked many hardships, but it may be questioned whether the agitations of the losers



*Acme Newspictures*

#### CAROL II, KING OF RUMANIA

Who, after a series of escapades and years of foreign exile, landed dramatically on his native soil in an airplane and is now striving to give his country a just and honest administration

are of service to the bulk of the Hungarians in Rumania. The Hungarians have the undeniable right to present their grievances to the League of Nations through diplomatic channels, and to work for the revision of the treaties, but in my opinion it is impolitic and unwise for the government at Budapest even tacitly to encourage agitations among the Hungarians in Rumania, who are now, after all, subjects of another state.

Do not think for a moment that I am lacking in sympathy for the Hungarians who have been placed under Rumanian rule against their will. But, looking the facts in the face, I can see no immediate prospect of any change in their status. What the future may have in store for them is, of course, a different matter. History has shown over and over again that anything may happen in the Danube country. Meanwhile, as I see it, the course of wisdom is for them to make the best of their situation. However shortsighted and deplorable were the methods employed by the Rumanians toward the Hungarians during the decade immediately following the war, I am convinced that nothing is further from the intention of the present government than to alienate its new subjects by unfairness and oppression. King Carol and his advisers are perfectly aware that only by adopting toward her huge minorities a policy of justice

and conciliation can Rumania's security and prosperity be assured.

I gained the impression while in Rumania that the bonds binding that country to France are showing signs, however slight, of slackening. The hitherto dominant influence of the Quai d'Orsay at Bucharest is on the wane. This is not at all surprising. The Rumanians are a proud people and they increasingly resent the suggestion that their country is in effect a vassal state and is being used by France for her own ends.

Among farseeing men in all the Balkan countries (yes, I am quite aware that Rumania is not, strictly speaking, in the Balkans) the conviction is growing that there can be no hope of permanent peace in that region as long as the great powers continue to use the smaller nations as pawns. They point out that in the past Russia and Austria used the Balkan peninsula as a chessboard for their political intrigues, and that the same perilous game is being played today by France and Italy. If Western Europe has long reproached the Balkans with being a source of disturbance and unrest, the Balkans now reproach Western Europe for fostering distrust among a group of nations that might work out their own salvation and live in amity were they left alone.

That the hitherto vague sentiment in favor of some sort of a working arrangement between the Balkan nations is taking definite form was proved by the speeches made at the Balkan Conference held in 1930 at Athens, in which six nations, including Turkey, participated. It must be admitted that this conference was not taken very seriously by the governments of the countries represented, but it was highly significant none the less. That representatives of Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece and Turkey should get together, like the directors in a big industrial concern, and that all of them should emphasize the fact that the only hope for permanent peace in the peninsula is in its countries discarding their animosities and rivalries and adopting a mutual policy of conciliation and collaboration, was a distinctly encouraging sign.

It is equally significant that the delegations were composed not of professional politicians, but of industrial and commercial leaders and others who are conspicuous in the public life of their respective countries without holding responsible government positions. As a consequence they talked in straightforward business terms instead of employing diplomatic euphemisms and evasions.

According to present plans the Balkan Conference

will be held annually, Constantinople—or Stamboul, as it is now called—being selected as the meeting-place for 1931. All questions which may arise between the annual sessions will be considered by the permanent committee which was appointed at the meeting in Athens, and assisting this central committee will be national committees whose business it will be to foster the idea of a Balkan Union in their respective states. The first step toward the formation of a Balkan confederation, it may be assumed, would be the creation of some form of customs union, thereby doing away with the tariff barriers which are so fruitful a source of friction between the Balkan nations. That, in itself, would be a long step in the right direction. But no legislation can put an end to the deep-seated racial and religious hatreds which have given the Balkans the unenviable name of “the cock-pit of Europe.” Those sources of trouble can be eliminated only by a long and patient campaign of propaganda and education and a complete change of policy on the part of the governments concerned. Both the governments and the peoples of the Balkans must be made to realize that vindictiveness and selfishness, rivalry and jealousy, injustice and oppression, never pay in the long run.

The group of level-headed business and professional

men who assembled so unostentatiously in Athens may be only impractical visionaries and idealists, as the professional politicians cynically contend, but to my way of thinking they made a more sensible contribution to the cause of European peace than the smug statesmen who for the past half-dozen years have been seeking to bring about peace by squabbling so ineffectually over the question of disarmament at Geneva.

For the latter, as I see it, approached the problem from the wrong end. *Armaments are not the cause of the prevailing resentment and fear, but the effect.* The causes—some of them, at least—I have tried to make clear to you in these pages. It is no more possible to eradicate the causes of European unrest by disarmament than it is to cure a cancer by local applications which temporarily alleviate the pain. Let the doctors at Geneva cease prating about naval parity and military reserves and budgetary restrictions. All those are only symptoms of a diseased condition. Let them, instead, set to work removing the causes for fear and suspicion. Once these sources of irritation and infection have been eliminated, the bandages of steel in which a suffering and terrified Europe has bound herself can safely be cast aside. There will be no further need of them.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE U.S.S.R.

NOTHING is more unwise, generally speaking, than to write about countries or governments or peoples when they are in a state of political flux, for what is true at the moment of writing may be misleading the next. But the events which are occurring in Soviet Russia are so extraordinary, so wholly without parallel, so pregnant with peril to the peace of the world, that the American people, it seems to me, should be given a clearer understanding of what they portend, should be awakened to the sinister nature of the forces behind them.

The truth is that our people are rapidly becoming surfeited with the information—and misinformation—regarding Russia which has so assiduously been fed them. Deluged with propaganda, bombarded with truths, half-truths and untruths, bewildered by conflicting statements, pelted with contradictory opinions, they have reached such a stage of mental confusion that they are about ready to give up in despair trying to find out what it is all about. They are beginning to ask them-

selves if, after all, it isn't a false alarm. Yet it is, on the contrary, a general alarm that is sounding.

I am far from underrating my readers' intelligence when I assert that the only way to grasp the extremely complicated and highly involved Russian situation—which sooner or later may affect the well-being of every man, woman and child in the world—is to treat it as a picture-puzzle. With your permission, then, I shall spread the pieces out as upon a board, explain as briefly as I may their individual significance and their relation to each other, and show you how, when fitted together, they form a picture which is as fascinating as it is terrifying.

Have I your attention? Very well. Let's go.

The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, to give the country we know as Russia its official name, is a federation of seven independent Soviet republics—Russia proper, White Russia, Ukraine, Transcaucasia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan—and a number of autonomous regions in Siberia and Russian Central Asia. The respective capitals of the seven republics are Moscow (which is likewise the capital of the Union), Minsk, Kharkov, Tiflis, Samarkand, Ashkabad, and Stalinabad, or Dushambe, as it was formerly known. Within the borders of the Union dwell 155 million people—one-

twelfth of the earth's inhabitants. A quarter again as large as the whole continent of North America with the adjacent islands thrown in, it covers one-sixth of the land surface of the globe.

The government of the U.S.S.R.—the ostensible government, I mean—consists of a Central Executive Committee and a Council of People's Commissars. The former is elected by the Congress of Soviets, the supreme authority of the Union, and, when that body is not in session, it exercises supreme legislative, administrative and judicial power. The Central Executive Committee is convened three times a year and consists of two chambers: the Union Council, whose members represent the seven constituent republics; and the Council of Nationalities, in which the various autonomous regions have representation. Current business is transacted by the Præsidium, or Standing Committee, which is composed of twenty-seven members, nine from each chamber and nine elected at a joint meeting. Subordinate legislative and executive authority is vested in the Council of People's Commissars, which is to all intents and purposes a cabinet, its president corresponding to a prime minister in other countries but possessed of considerably less power.

But lurking in the shadows of the great hall in which

the Executive Committee sits, hovering like some evil jinnee above its deliberations, is an unseen Force, malign, ubiquitous, all-powerful, whose spectral fingers manipulate the strings. Its name is Communism. Its embodiment is the Third Communist International, or, as it is known in Russia, Komintern, a political octopus whose tentacles reach out from Moscow across the world.

The Third Communist International (the First ended with the collapse of the Paris Commune in 1871; the Second with the outbreak of the Great War in 1914) is, as its name implies, the organization of the Communist party of all nations. It is the directing intelligence, the great general staff, of Communism. Its functions are double-barreled: to foment discord, discontent and rebellion in all capitalist countries; to consolidate and encourage Communist activities everywhere. Its aim is the overthrow of the capitalist nations and the raising on their ruins of proletarian-ruled states which will eventually join with Russia to form a vast Communist Confederation. In other words, to bring about a world revolution.

The point I wish to make perfectly clear is that for all practical purposes *the Communist party and the Soviet government are one and the same*. They are joined by the cartilage of Komintern as inseparably as Siamese

twins. This the spokesmen for the Moscow government emphatically deny. They claim that the two bodies are independent; that Komintern does not control the government and that the latter has a mind of its own. Nothing could be further from the truth. What the Communists decide today the government decrees tomorrow. The Communist party is, in short, the government of Russia in everything save name.

Tear the mask from the Russian government and you will find yourself looking straight into the malevolent eyes of Communism. It should, therefore, be clear to everyone that were the government at Washington to recognize the Soviet Union, it would, in effect, be recognizing the Communist party—and that party makes no secret of its intention to overthrow every capitalist government in the world, including our own. Indeed, the Communists have proclaimed over and over again that they consider themselves in what amounts to a state of war with the United States. They are our enemies by their own admission. Hence, any American who advocates American recognition of the Soviet government is either appallingly ignorant of the facts, is a secret sympathizer with Communism, or is seeking to serve his own selfish ends.

Stripped to its chassis, the mechanism of the Communism party is something like this. A Communist Congress elects a Central Committee. The Central Committee, in turn, elects a Political Bureau and a Secretary-General. This Central Committee is in a strong position in the party; the Political Bureau is in a strong position in the Committee; while the Secretary-General has an overwhelmingly strong position in both.

Is that quite clear?

The chief purpose of Komintern, as I have already explained, is to plan and provoke events—unemployment, strikes, lock-outs, labor demonstrations, riots, bank failures, rebellions, foreign wars—anything, in short, which will produce the state of discontent and unrest necessary for a world revolution. It has its spies and its *agents provocateurs* everywhere. It has the most efficient and far-flung intelligence system the world has ever seen. Its propaganda, spread in every country and every walk of life, is amazingly effective. Its emissaries masquerade as labor leaders, as school-teachers and college professors, as editors and authors and lecturers, as business and professional men. They even occupy seats in the great parliamentary bodies of the world.

Komintern engineered the short-lived Soviet repub-

lics in Bavaria and Hungary (Bela Kun was sent to Budapest for the purpose by Lenin) and, after their collapse, the bloody outbreaks in China, the labor troubles in Britain, Italy, Germany, and recently in Spain, and the numerous Red demonstrations which have occurred throughout the United States. Did you know—and I have this on the authority of the American Governor of the Canal Zone—that when, in 1925, American troops were forced to occupy the Republic of Panama, our intelligence service found indisputable proof that the leaders of the insurrection were in the pay and under the direction of Moscow?

Because, as I have already remarked, the Communist party considers itself at war with all capitalist nations, its organization may be compared to that of an army on a war footing. Its general staff is Komintern, with its headquarters in Moscow. The chief of the general staff is the Secretary-General of the Central Committee. Its spies and its intelligence officers, operating throughout the world, keep the general staff constantly supplied with information. The professional agitators who are constantly inciting unrest, staging demonstrations and provoking riots form Communism's skirmish line. And back of this Red skirmish line, ready to be employed whenever a favorable opportunity offers, are the shock



*Acme Newspictures*

A POLITICAL CHESS-PLAYER OF CONSUMMATE SKILL  
Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Russia's Commissar for Foreign Affairs

battalions, drilled, disciplined, and in many cases armed. I have it on the assurance of a personage whose authority cannot be questioned that *there are 120,000 armed Communist shock troops in Germany alone.*

These secret battalions are the nuclei around which, should the revolution come, the less well organized Communists would rally. To them is assigned the duty of seizing the vital points of a country's defenses: its arsenals, power plants, railways, radio and telegraph systems. They are designed to form the spear-heads of the Communist thrust.

Save in the case of a certain few countries, the Communists of Western Europe and their first cousins, the Socialists, are so well organized as to form what amounts to the front line of a world revolution. In fact, a country which contains a strong and active Communist party would find it next to impossible to participate in a general counter-revolutionary movement. In terms of practical politics, this means that the governments of Europe could not undertake a war against Russia in the face of their own Communists and Socialists. Whether they could successfully oppose a Communist offensive within their own borders, provided the conditions for it were propitious, is another question.

You think, no doubt, that the very idea of the Com-

munists being able to overthrow the established government of any western country and bring it under their control is preposterous, chimerical. It is, so far as America is concerned. But conditions in Europe are wholly different from those in the United States. There, under certain circumstances, a Communist offensive might conceivably stand a fair chance of success.

Take Germany, for example. It is at least within the bounds of possibility that, if the present economic depression and unemployment should become more acute, if misery and suffering should increase among the working classes, a considerable section of the German people might turn in their despair to Communism. For the fact should not be lost sight of that Communism is already far stronger in Germany than most people suppose.

There would be labor troubles, skillfully fomented by agents in the pay of Moscow; riots, clashes with the police. Then, at the psychological moment, the Communist shock battalions in Germany to which I have already referred, held in readiness for just such an opportunity, would take a hand. Armed, drilled and ably led, they would be able to hold the fort, as it were, while the masses of Communist sympathizers were being organized. Operating with military precision, in accordance with plans which have been worked out to the minutest

detail by the Communist general staff in Moscow, they would overcome the resistance of the police and the local military authorities, occupy all positions of strategic importance in the district where the rising took place, and, by seizing the communications, hamper the movements of government forces. The red flag would be hoisted, a dictator appointed by Moscow, and the occupied territory would be organized on Soviet lines. Whether such a state could maintain itself would, of course, depend entirely on the support given it by the people themselves and the strength and determination of the government in Berlin.

Before scouting such a possibility—mind you, I do not say that it is a probability—it is well to look back a short dozen years, to remember that this very thing came within a hair's breadth of happening in Northern Italy shortly after the war, when Communism was far weaker on the whole than it is today. That the attempt failed, that Italy is not today a Red republic, was due solely to the prompt and ruthless measures adopted by the Italian Fascists. That is why many believe—myself among them—that the German Fascists—the Nazis—organized by Adolf Hitler might, in such an emergency, prove the means of saving the Reich from Communism.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA

A HIGHLY disquieting symptom, as I see it, is the success which Communist propaganda is achieving in the United States. As a result of skillfully directed propaganda, so cleverly camouflaged that it is seldom recognizable as such, the American people, who started out by being violently hostile to everything connected with Communism, have gradually been brought around to what might be described as a receptive frame of mind. The unspeakable horrors which marked the early days of Red rule, in Russia, the murder of the imperial family, the wholesale massacres of the bourgeois, the brutal extermination of the more prosperous peasant farmers, the employment of a system of forced labor which is only a few steps removed from slavery, the reign of terror which still prevails in certain parts of the Soviet Union—all these are dimmed, if not forgotten, by our growing admiration for the undeniable economic achievements of the Soviet government.

The American people, at first terrified by the Red menace, have had it so constantly dinned in their ears that they are beginning to ask themselves if the whole business is not exaggerated, if they have not been unduly alarmed. That explains in some measure why the report of the Fish Committee was not taken more seriously. Perhaps, it is argued, we haven't been fair to the Soviets. They can hardly be as black as they have been painted. After all, we ought to listen to their side of the case. And, sensing this change in public sentiment, an astonishing number of Americans have come forward in defense and praise of Communism.

Now it would be unfair and misleading for me to leave you with the impression that every American who champions the Soviet government or Communism (they are one and the same) is a secret emissary of Moscow. It is true, however, that, consciously or unconsciously, they are playing Moscow's game.

These volunteer propagandists fall into several categories and are actuated by various motives. Take, for example, the parlor Socialists and pale-pinks and others of that irresponsible, half-baked breed, usually with more hair than brains, who, without really knowing what it is all about, defend Communism because it is the vogue in certain circles to do so, because it stamps

them as being of the intelligentsia, and because it attracts attention to themselves. They are comparatively harmless because they are not taken seriously by most thoughtful persons.

Another group—more dangerous because its members have more intelligence—is composed of those authors and editors who are habitually opposed to the established order of things. Sincere or insincere in their convictions, they have found that being “agin the gov’ment” increases the salability of their articles and the circulation of their publications. They make it a point never to espouse the established order of things.

Perfectly sincere but wholly impractical college professors and students of economics make more or less sketchy tours of Russia, are properly impressed by what they are permitted to see, and return to their classrooms and lecture platforms brimming over with praise for Communism. A few score pleaders of this brand, occupying responsible positions in the educational institutions of the land, can do more to mold the opinions of American youth than all the propaganda turned out by the Moscow presses. Their value is fully recognized by the Communist authorities and they are treated with marked consideration by the Bureau of Cultural Relations in Moscow.

Perhaps the most insidiously dangerous group of all, because the most responsible and the most intelligent, consists of those engineers and technical experts who hold highly profitable contracts with the Soviet government for the building of railways, power plants and manufacturing establishments of various kinds or who are employed for the purpose of speeding up the industrial output of the Soviet Union. To them Communism is a matter of dollars and cents. They are out to fill their pockets, and if, in order to do so, they find it wise to praise Communism, well, what of it? Every employee knows that the best way to get ahead is to jolly up the boss.

The same selfish reasons actuate those American business men who advocate the establishment of diplomatic and commercial relations with the Soviet government. They are not concerned with the detail that the timber and other raw materials which they seek to import from Russia are produced by human beings living in a state of bondage. All that interests them is that such materials can be obtained from Russia more cheaply than elsewhere. They are not worried about Communism's threat to American institutions so long as they can find in Russia profitable markets for their goods.

Perhaps the most valuable class of all, from the Com-

unist point of view, consists of the American tourists who are going to Russia in constantly increasing numbers from motives of curiosity and in order to tell their friends at home that they have been there. They are valuable because they are obviously sincere and have no personal axes to grind. They pay their own expenses—thereby leaving large quantities of good American dollars in the country—and all that is required to bend them to the purposes of propaganda is a little flattery and attention.

Take the typical case of two Americans, prominent and influential residents of a New England city, whom I ran across in Moscow. They had purchased their tickets, it developed, through "Intourist," the Soviet government's official travel bureau, which—for a consideration—had made all arrangements for them in advance.

Droshkies are scarce in Moscow, and taxis almost unprocurable, but upon their arrival in Moscow our two Americans had been met at the station by an Intourist representative with a limousine. Throughout their stay in the capital, as in other cities, a car and a chauffeur were always at their disposition. Rooms with running water, or, indeed, with any water at all, are extremely difficult to obtain in Moscow hotels, but the visitors

found two huge ones, complete with baths and lavatories, awaiting them. A girl guide who was, of course, an agent of the OGPU—and a very pretty and intelligent girl at that—never let them out of her sight. Incidentally, they were so pleased with her that when they left they gave her, in addition to her pay, a generous honorarium.

“Now, what would you gentlemen like to see?” a courteous official of Intourist asked them after they were installed in their hotel. “We are eager to show you anything you wish. We have nothing to conceal here in Russia.”

One of the Americans admitted after some hesitation that he had always had a hankering to visit a Russian prison.

“Nothing could be simpler,” was the answer. “Some of our penal establishments, of course, are rather remote, but there is one within a short distance of Moscow that you can visit quite easily. I’ll send word to the governor that you are coming.”

Did they see any of the miseries and horrors which the world has been led to associate with Bolshevik prisons? Hardly. On the contrary they found a model institution where well-clad, well-treated, apparently

contented prisoners sang old Russian songs and were served an abundance of wholesome, well-cooked food. When their guide was not looking the Americans even managed to exchange a few words with an English-speaking prisoner, who confided to them in a hoarse whisper that he would rather be a prisoner under the Bolsheviks than a free man under the tsars. That carefully rehearsed incident made a profound impression.

Later on they were shown a model factory, a model tenement, a model dispensary, a model hospital, and a model soup-kitchen. They had a box at the opera, the ballet and the theater.

“What do you think of the food?” I asked them. “I find that it is expensive, poor and scarce.”

“Hell’s bells, man!” one of them exclaimed. “I’ve never had so much caviare and champagne in my life. As soon as we leave Russia I’m going on a diet to get back my figure.”

“But, Bill,” interposed his companion, evidently striving to be fair, “you know we did see a bread-line.”

“Sure, I remember that,” was the answer, “but our guide told us, you remember, that the government bread is so good that the people would rather wait in line to get it than to bake their own.”

The gentlemen in question returned in due course to

their home town, gave copious interviews to the local newspapers, and spoke before the Chamber of Commerce, the Optimists and the Rotary Club. What do you think they told their listeners about conditions in Russia and the success of Sovietism? I leave you to guess.

Don't you see how effective—and inexpensive—is this form of propaganda? The efforts made during the war by the British, French and Germans to impress influential foreigners were pale and feeble in comparison.

Another American, a financier of international reputation, who had spent some years in Eastern Europe and therefore ought to have possessed more discernment, became distinctly irritated when I failed to agree with him as to conditions in Russia.

“But, of course,” he remarked patronizingly, “you didn't have the same opportunities to investigate conditions that I did.”

“Where did you stay when you were in Moscow?” I asked him.

“The government,” he replied, “put us up in the Litvinov Palace.”

Not a hotel, I might mention parenthetically, but the residence of the Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

“Did you have any trouble in getting taxis?” I inquired innocently.

“We didn’t need them. The government placed a couple of Rolls-Royces at our disposal.”

“Did you find traveling uncomfortable?”

“On the contrary. The government gave us a private car, you see, and had it attached to the fast trains.”

“What do you think of the food situation?”

“My dear fellow,” he said impressively, “we couldn’t have had better food, or more of it, at the best restaurant in New York. If there is a shortage of food in Russia—and I doubt it—we saw no signs of it.”

Later on I saw in the papers that this gentleman, upon his return to the United States, had delivered an address at the Bankers’ Club in New York. He expressed himself, according to the accounts, as being very optimistic in regard to Russia.

Such pæans of praise, chanted by a succession of reputable and more or less influential Americans, are naturally having a pronounced effect on public opinion. Indeed, those Americans who return from Russia and are not bursting with enthusiasm are beginning to be regarded with some suspicion. If they venture to criticize conditions in Soviet-land they are suspected of suffering from mental dyspepsia, of nursing a grudge or a grouch. Russia, in the eyes of those whom the Soviet government has dry-nursed through one of its

heavily upholstered sightseeing tours, is The Coming Country. Communism is a Noble Experiment Which Will Some Day Astonish the World. It certainly will. But not in the way they mean.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN

THE Soviet Union is unique among the countries of the world in that it has no official head. But it has an un-official head in the person of the Secretary-General of the Communist party—Joseph Stalin. That he is the country's undisputed dictator was proved conclusively in December, 1930, when he dismissed Alexei Rykov, who, as president of the Council of Peoples' Commis-sars, was virtually Prime Minister of Russia, as uncere-moniously as he would have fired his cook. What an astounding anomaly that the government of Russia should be under the complete domination of a man who holds no official governmental position!

This man, the world's most sinister and mysterious figure, is a Georgian, born in the Caucasus fifty years ago. His father was a village cobbler. His parents intended him for the priesthood, but he was expelled from the theological school for some escapade when he was still in his teens—an episode which has immensely enhanced his prestige with the atheistic Communist

party. For nineteen years he was alternately a convict and a fugitive. In that period he was arrested and exiled six times, escaped five times, finally being liberated by the revolution. Today his picture is displayed, beside that of Lenin, in every office, shop, factory, barracks, railway station and government building in the Soviet Union. The absolute master of 155 millions of people, hated by some as a tyrant and worshiped by others as a prophet, the acknowledged commander-in-chief of Communism, with the power to dismiss the highest officials of the government and, if he sees fit, to send them before a firing-party, he is the most potent political leader in the world—and the most ruthless. He was christened Joseph Djugashvilli, but, because of his hardness, Lenin gave him the Russian name for steel—Stalin. Of him Lenin said on his death-bed, “He is too hard for me.”

Stalin, as I have shown, is the unseen ruler of Russia, the uncrowned king of Communism. He is the driving force behind the industrial revolution and the directing intelligence of the world revolution for which the Communists are working. He is the engineer-in-chief of the Five-Year Plan. He is the inexorable master who, by ordering the wholesale confiscation of food-stuffs, has brought the Russian people to the brink of

starvation; who has decreed the allocation of labor, as forced labor is euphemistically called; who, in pursuance of his ruthless policy, has enslaved a nation.

Whether Russia can become an actual menace to the peace of the world, whether she can achieve the economic strength and freedom which will enable her to give armed support to world-Communism in its projected attack on the capitalist nations, depends, in the final analysis, upon the success or failure of the Five-Year Plan.

Just what is this plan which has stirred the imagination of the world as it has perhaps never been stirred before by any economic measure, which has aroused such unparalleled interest and provoked such bitter discussion?

Compressed into a score of words, it is a scheme for the reconstruction within a space of five years of the demoralized economic system of the Soviet Union.

Piatiletka, as it is known in Russia, which completed its second year on October 1, 1930, is the result of a conviction among the Soviet leaders that the capitalist governments will eventually join in a boycott of Russia; that in the not far distant future Russia will be economically isolated, unable to buy from or sell to the outside world. In order to nullify the effects of the

anticipated blockade, the Soviet administration has adopted Piatiletka. If it succeeds its sponsors believe that by 1933 Russia will be so completely independent of outside sources for its necessities that the Soviet system cannot only continue to exist in defiance of a world-wide embargo, but that it can carry on its program of industrialization and socialization and will eventually be strong enough to employ its armed forces in support of a world revolution.

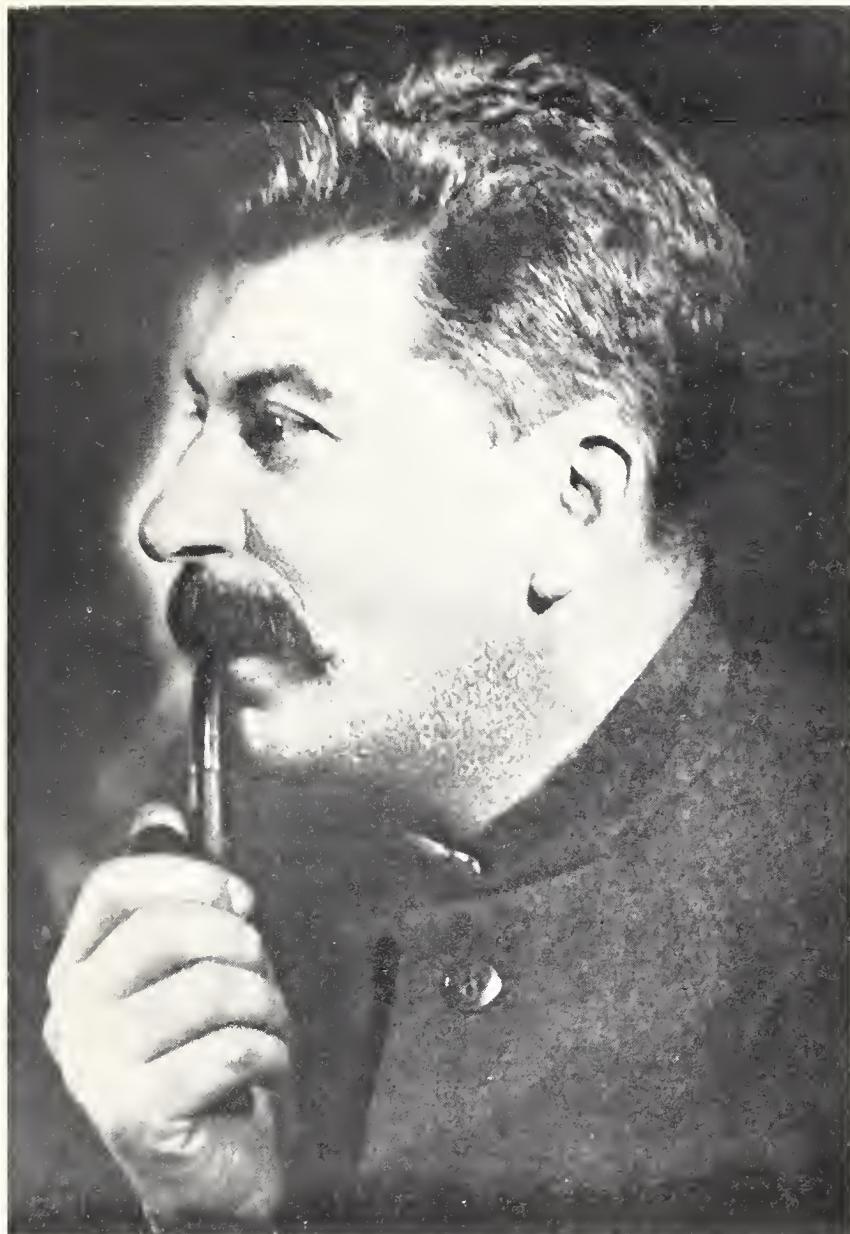
Let me see if I can explain Piatiletka in even simpler terms.

A vessel is wrecked off a remote island in the wastes of the Pacific. The members of the crew succeed in getting ashore only to find that the island is incapable of supporting them for any length of time. They suddenly awake to the realization that they may be cut off from the rest of the world for years, perhaps forever. If they are to exist they must have the means of providing themselves with the necessities of life—food and shelter. In the ship's cargo is all that they require—seeds, hoes, shovels, plows, lumber, axes, saws, hammers, nails, fishhooks, cloth, needles, thread—to make themselves self-sustaining. But the engineers report that the vessel cannot be kept afloat much longer; that at any moment it may disappear beneath the waves. The existence of

the crew depends, then, on getting ashore as much of the cargo as possible before the vessel sinks. There is not a moment to be lost. They must labor day and night. They must hurry, hurry, hurry.

Translate the shipwrecked crew into the people of Soviet Russia, the cargo of the sinking vessel into the markets of the outside world, which, so the Russians believe, may be closed to them in the near future, and you will understand why Russia has undertaken the Five-Year Plan and the frenzied, fear-whipped energy behind it. The analogy is not a perfect one, but it is the best I can give you.

In order to provide against the day when, so she is convinced, a world-wide boycott will be declared against her, Russia is frantically accumulating a stock of the articles—principally tools and industrial machinery—which she must have if she is to carry on. To purchase these she must have credits abroad. To establish these credits she is selling everything she can possibly spare—grain, lumber, meats, furs, petroleum, eggs, dairy products—and in such great quantities that she is inflicting enormous hardships on her own people. These articles cost Russia very little, for they are either confiscated or produced by forced labor. Consequently they can be sold at any price they will bring. This is known



*W. W. Photos*

#### THE UNCROWNED KING OF COMMUNISM

He was christened Joseph Djugashvilli, but, because of his hardness, Lenin gave him the Russian name for steel—Stalin

as dumping. There is some danger of the Soviet dumping policy proving a boomerang, however, for, by disturbing foreign markets and exasperating foreign governments, it may eventually bring about that very boycott which the Russians so fear.

It is expected that upon the completion of the huge plants now in process of construction—many of them under the supervision of highly paid American engineers—they will leap into mass production of important commodities. These commodities, it is estimated, will be sufficient not only to supply the needs of the Russian people, but will eventually be produced in such quantities that Russia will be enabled to undersell other nations in their own markets, thereby producing unemployment, industrial unrest, financial depression and, finally, the world revolution.

One can get all sorts of estimates as to the progress of the Five-Year Plan, depending upon to whom one talks. There are those optimists who assert that the plan will be realized in four years instead of five, and there are others who insist that it will take ten. Being myself no economic expert, and possessing no sources of information which are not available to other investigators, I hesitate to express an opinion as to the probable success or failure of the plan. Judged by foreign economic

standards the plan seems impossible of realization, yet the Soviets have already accomplished so many things which the outside world insisted could not be accomplished that they may put over the Five-Year Plan too.

Those who believe in its success will tell you that it is not important if the results attained are only 90 per cent, say, of the figures set as the goal; even so the Communist leaders will have performed a miracle. But that is losing sight of the main point. For the success of the plan is not comparative. If it is not 100 per cent successful it must be counted a failure, for it is supposed to be the peculiar merit of the Soviet system that it knows exactly where it is going and gets there at the time set. For an army to cover only 90 per cent of the distance to its objective may be a notable achievement, but it is not success in the eyes of the General Staff. Thus, the German armies came within 90 per cent of reaching the English Channel. It was their failure to achieve the remaining 10 per cent which lost Germany the war.

Again, the word "completion," as applied to the plan, is open to various interpretations. In May, 1930, for example, Moscow announced with a great flourish of trumpets the "completion" of the Turk-Sib Railway—the line linking the Russian Central Asian system with

the Trans-Siberian. Yet the railway experts with whom I have talked are agreed that it will probably be well into 1932 before it is actually in operation. In June, 1930, the Stalingrad tractor plant was, according to official announcements, "completed" ahead of time. According to the plans it should have commenced turning out about 2,000 tractors a month. Yet in the last quarter of 1930, and then only as a result of the most extraordinary efforts, they were being produced at the rate of only about 300 a month.

In addressing the directors of Soviet industry recently, Stalin pointed out that the construction of factories in Russia is a comparatively simple matter. That is obviously true. All that is required is materials, which can be bought abroad if they cannot be obtained by confiscation at home; labor, which can be forced if it is not procurable otherwise; and competent supervision, provided, at a price, by American engineers. In a few months the factory is completed. Then the Russians must learn to operate it. There comes the rub. For the average Russian is totally lacking in mechanical aptitude. Yet, if the Five-Year Plan is to succeed, these new factories must not only spring into production immediately they are completed, but they must be speeded up so that their output will vastly exceed that of foreign

factories of the same size. That, almost overnight, the Russian masses, an industrially backward people, fresh from the plow, can master the technique of modern industry and successfully compete with the United States, Great Britain and Germany is, on the face of it, fantastic.

One of these days, as Mr. Edwin L. James has pointed out, the Kremlin dictators must tell the Russian people that they are toiling and struggling not on a five-year plan but on a twenty-five-year plan. At least it will be necessary to break the news to them that their efforts will not bear ripened fruit in the near future, as they have been led to suppose, but that they must struggle along for years and years—perhaps for a quarter of a century. Then will come the great test of the stability of the Soviet régime. There will be bitter disappointment and disillusionment and discontent; that goes without saying. Will the Russian workers consent to suffer for another fifteen or twenty years in order to gain the heaven-on-earth that has been promised them; will they continue to eat black bread—and abominable stuff it is—while the Kremlin pours into foreign markets the wheat they have grown? Or, in their desperation and despair, will they turn on those who have been responsible for all their misery and rend them?

Another serious obstacle to the success of the industrial revolution is the condition of the Russian railways. They are wearing out and the demands upon them are greater than they can bear. With wrecks costing a thousand lives a year, with traffic jams holding loaded grain cars in lines for weeks outside the cities, the whole railway system is collapsing under the load of the Five-Year Plan. The same may be said of the other means of communication. The postal system is thoroughly demoralized. The telegraph system is a standing joke among the Russians themselves. The day before I left Moscow I sent a telegram to the hotel in Leningrad reserving rooms. It arrived two days after I did.

Russia is the only country in the world today where there is no unemployment. In fact, the lack of labor presents to those behind the Five-Year Plan a serious problem, and in their attempts to solve it by allocation—that is, by sending laborers from place to place as they are needed—they have been guilty of grave abuses. Yet the assumption that all labor in the Soviet Union is forced labor was not borne out by my investigations.

There is a shortage of workers in the forests of the north and in the mines. The shortage is due to the pronounced distaste of the workers for the bitter cold of the forest regions and the labor conditions which pre-

vail in the mining districts. Yet laborers must be supplied in order to carry on the Five-Year Plan. Here is the way it is done. The head of a labor union receives word from Moscow that, say, a thousand men are required immediately for the northern lumber camps. He assembles the members of his union and calls for volunteers. His call meets with no enthusiasm. "You'll go, won't you, Alexei?" he says, singling out a man. "And you, Boris? And you, Nicholas? And you? And you? And you?" Those he names sullenly assent, not because they have the slightest desire to go, but because they are perfectly aware that if they refuse something worse will happen to them. This is what is euphemistically known as "volunteering." But this necessity of putting workmen on jobs they do not want and keeping them there against their will is recognized by Moscow as being a serious problem. Resentment at the system is increasing among the workers and it may be questioned whether the government can get away with it indefinitely.

It is beyond question, however, that out-and-out forced labor is employed in certain regions, such as the timberlands of the north, the mining districts in the Urals, the Turk-Sib Railway, and the irrigation projects in Turkestan. Those who labor under duress consist of

two classes: prisoners, political or otherwise, and exiled kulaks. By kulaks is meant the well-to-do peasant farmers who, in the process of collectivization, have been forcibly dispossessed of their property and sent into exile. These unfortunate people formed the backbone of Russia's agricultural population. They were not guilty of plotting against the Soviet administration, you understand, or, indeed, of any crime—as we know the word—political or otherwise. But they *were* guilty of owning property and of having achieved a modest degree of prosperity. And that is a crime in the eyes of Communism. Accordingly, orders were sent out from Moscow that they were to be eliminated, exterminated. Thousands who offered resistance were killed on the spot or executed after farcical trials. Those who survived, stripped of everything they possessed, were herded together like cattle, loaded like cattle into box cars, and shipped to distant points—some to the sun-scorched wastes of Turkestan; others to the mining camps in the Urals and Siberia; but the great majority, probably, to the chill forests on the edge of the Arctic. How many have been exiled will probably never be known, but the number certainly runs into the millions. The Soviet authorities assert that these ex-kulaks are paid the same wages as ordinary laborers but admit that they are not

permitted to leave the district to which they have been assigned. The element of compulsion as to their place of residence is not denied. The wholesale exile and enslavement of the kulaks constitutes one of the most infamous political crimes in history. The Captivity of the Jews, the Expulsion of the Acadians, the corvées of Tewfik Pasha, universally condemned as inhuman, were humane and mild in comparison.

It is said that forty American corporations and upward of a thousand American engineers and skilled workmen are helping the Soviets to carry out the industrial revolution.

The engineers receive from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year each—most of them the latter figure. American skilled workmen, usually employed on a one-year contract, receive from \$200 to \$300 a month paid into an American bank, plus 300 to 400 roubles in Soviet currency. The cost of their food averages  $3\frac{1}{2}$  roubles a day; their rent perhaps 30 roubles a month. The Soviet Union is banking heavily on the help of these American engineers and workmen to make the Five-Year Plan a success, and plans to double or even triple the number now at work.

The most prominent of the American engineers in Russia is Colonel Hugh L. Cooper, who is in charge of the vast hydraulic works being constructed in the

Ukraine. Colonel Cooper has been quoted in the New York *Evening Post* as saying:

“Should Americans be helping these people? I think that we should be guided entirely as engineers by what efforts on our part can help 160,000,000 people to better their living conditions. These 160,000,000 are begging for good business relations with the United States, and *I don't know of any place else on the globe where there are such opportunities for good business relations as Russia.*”

The italics are my own. I use them in order to emphasize Colonel Cooper's point of view, because it is the point of view of all those Americans who are selling their services to the Reds or are urging American citizens to lend their money to the Reds. Perhaps my standard of ethics is all wrong, but it seems to one of my modest intelligence that every American who, in his itch for gain, aids the Soviets to accomplish the Five-Year Plan and to bring nearer the world revolution, is striking a deadly blow at the institutions and well-being of his own country. They may advance the specious plea, as does Colonel Cooper, that they are seeking to improve the living conditions of the poor, downtrodden Russians, but their altruism has a singularly sordid tinge.

Let us glance at the background against which Colonel Cooper draws his thesis.

The Soviet régime has refused to pay Russia's debts to the United States. To give its refusal a pretense of legality there has been written into the fundamental law of the Soviet Union a provision justifying the government in repudiating any obligation when it is to the advantage of those in power to do so. On countless other occasions the Soviets have demonstrated their utter lack of common honesty. And, what is still more important, they have shown over and over again that to gain their ends they are prepared to resort to tyranny, slavery, brutality, murder.

The dictatorship has established a system that compels every man in Russia to work where he is required to work, with or without his consent, under penalty of starvation or imprisonment at hard labor. By means of this enormous mass of forced labor it is enabled to exploit the country's natural resources, all of which it has confiscated. The output in grain, timber and mineral products is sold abroad at any price that it will bring. It is all profit to the Communists, for the materials, as I have pointed out, are confiscated and the labor is forced. These commodities are being dumped at less than world prices upon the markets of countries where

labor is free and well paid, thereby undermining industry and producing unemployment and economic depression. This sort of thing may be of momentary profit to a limited number of American financiers and business men, but if American workingmen fully comprehended its true significance and aim they would lose not a moment in bringing it to an end.

The government of the United States has steadfastly refused to enter into relations with the Soviet régime because of the latter's policy of terrorism and debt repudiation. Yet, in some manner which would bear explanation, Communist agents are admitted into the United States to carry on their campaign against American institutions. These agents could not enter the United States without first obtaining visas from our diplomatic or consular officers abroad—yet such visas are given. When they arrive at American ports and are questioned by the Bureau of Immigration they perjure themselves by denying under oath their connection with Communism. In other words, the Department of Labor is powerless to keep these conspirators out so long as the Department of State admits them. Cargoes of Russian goods produced by forced labor are permitted to enter the United States with little if any hindrance. And, under the thin disguise of a trading

corporation, the Soviets maintain on Fifth Avenue, in New York City, what amounts to an embassy, with branches scattered throughout the United States, where Russian visas may be arranged for, where Communist propaganda is disseminated, and business between Americans and the Soviet government carried on.

The truth is that a desperate effort is being made by the Soviets to build up a trade with the United States, because the Reds need American machinery and American money in order to carry out their scheme of turning the world upside down. It is estimated that the value of American goods thus far sold to the Soviets is about \$150,000,000, but it is stated that Russia would be glad to purchase a billion dollars' worth of American goods—provided, of course, she can get them on credit. Though "such opportunities for good business relations," to employ the words of Colonel Cooper, may appeal to the cupidity of certain American business men, it might be pointed out, by way of warning, that Soviet Russia has never hesitated to repudiate her debts when it did not suit her to pay them.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE THREAT OF THE BEAR

It is utterly impossible to grasp the tremendous significance of what is happening in Russia, to understand why the Russians submit without remonstrance to being underfed, poorly clad and generally miserable, unless you are willing to accept my statement that they sincerely believe themselves to be the victims of a vast conspiracy, engineered by the capitalist nations, aimed at their destruction. This conspiracy, so the Russians have been led to believe, may take the form of starving them into submission by means of an economic blockade, or it may result in an armed invasion.

You laugh at the idea as chimerical, preposterous, fantastic. But that is because you fail to realize the power over an ignorant, isolated and credulous people of a system wherein every publicly spoken and printed word, every book, magazine and newspaper, every school, club and lecture platform, every theater, radio and motion picture, every avenue of instruction, information

and entertainment, is utilized for purposes of propaganda by a pitiless political machine.

The Russian people—nine-tenths of them illiterate and simple-minded—never dream of questioning the ridiculous and fantastic misinformation which their government so assiduously feeds them because, so effective is the censorship, they obtain no inkling of the truth. Among the more intelligent classes there are some, of course, who recognize the palpable falsity of the statements issued by the government and venture to criticize its policy. But they rarely criticize a second time. In Russia your criticism is usually your epitaph.

To the Russian people the specter of foreign intervention is terrifyingly real. They are as firmly convinced that the capitalist nations are secretly preparing a mass attack on them as the capitalist nations are convinced that sooner or later they will be attacked by Russia. The Russian people—even those who are by no means sympathetic to Communism—believe this as firmly as they believe that the sun rises in the east. It is dinned into their consciousness by means of motion pictures, plays, posters, pamphlets and the press. All day long and through half the night the mammoth loud-speakers erected in the Red Square and along the Nevsky Prospekt blare raucous warnings of the impending invasion.

The great department stores in Moscow and Leningrad devote whole windows to ingeniously arranged tableaux depicting Russian villages bombed by capitalist aircraft, Russian peasants dying by the thousand from poison gas fired from capitalist guns. Stirring public appeals are made and subscription lists opened to raise funds for the purchase of heavy artillery, tanks and airplanes. The fears of the populace are worked upon by the exhibition of demolition bombs and instruction in the use of gas masks. As recently as March, 1931, the premier of the Soviet Union, Viacheslav Molotov, said in opening the federal council, "The Soviet government's main danger today is armed intervention."

No nation in the world, as Mr. Gilbert Seldes has pointed out, is as mentally mobilized for war as Russia. Hatred of everything non-Communistic has become the Russian creed, and every man, woman and child is taught that devotion to this creed may be most convincingly shown by engaging in some form of war preparation. By 1933, according to the government's plan, about seventeen million persons will be trained in some form of war or semi-war activity, such as defense against gas and aircraft. Some two million men in addition to the regular army will receive at least rudimentary military instruction, including bayonet drill and

rifle practice, and five million women will be inoculated with the war virus by being trained in the use of the rifle and the gas mask, as ambulance and cammion drivers and as nurses. In air and chemical warfare, six million civilians will receive instruction. In numerous areas the military authorities have simulated air and gas attacks on a large scale, and very realistically, the civilian populations being carefully instructed in the measures they must take for their own protection.

Many people seem to be under the impression that the Red army is a negligible factor; that it has become demoralized and inefficient under Soviet administration and can safely be discounted. Yet exactly the opposite is the truth. Those who are in a position to know whereof they speak agree that it is better trained, better disciplined, more loyal, probably better equipped and led, than it was under the tsars. Certainly neither pains nor expense have been spared to increase its effectiveness. The Russian people may be cold and hungry, but the army is well clad, well fed. The enlisted men I saw were superior in physique to any other troops on the continent save only the German. They were vigorous, confident, in the pink of condition, with stout, well-made boots and great-coats of excellent quality reaching to their ankles. It is the policy of the government to

keep the army not only at top-notch efficiency, but satisfied, for Stalin and his lieutenants know that on its unwavering loyalty depends the very existence of the Soviet system.

The actual strength of the Red army is a matter of conjecture, for it is obviously difficult to obtain accurate statistics at the present time. The Statesman's Year-Book places the men available for military service each year at approximately one million, though in 1928 only 800,000 were called up for training. The same authority estimates the strength of the permanent establishment (as of 1928) at 562,000 men, but it is generally agreed that this is an underestimate. The real figure is probably nearer a million. The Paris *l'Illustration* places it at 1,812,000, but that is an exaggeration.

The Soviet military establishment includes two bodies of an entirely exceptional character: the special troops of the Political Department and the Communist shock battalions. The former, which are under the control of the OGPU and come under the Ministry of War only for operations, are entrusted with the maintenance of internal security, the quelling of civil disturbances, frontier and coast guard service, intelligence and police work. They are, in fact, the pillar on which Soviet rule rests, and they are recruited accordingly from the staunchest

elements of the Communist party. The shock battalions, 100,000 strong, are composed of youthful fanatics, death-or-glory boys, who have sworn to sacrifice themselves in the cause of Communism.

Back of these active elements are the vast reserves of trained men which would be called to the colors in time of war. These have been placed as high as fifteen millions, and, in view of the fact that the Soviet Union has a population of 155,000,000, the figure does not appear excessive. Back of the reserves, in turn, are the battalions of the League of Communist Youth. These youngsters begin their military training at the age of eight; they are taught the use of arms when about fourteen; and by the time they are called to the colors, they are thoroughly versed in all modern forms of death and destruction.

From all that I have been able to learn, the Red army is exceedingly well officered. Its military training schools compare favorably with any in Europe. Many of the higher officers were trained under the tsarist régime. Though the younger ones, say up to the rank of major, have obtained their shoulder-straps since the revolution, their lack of actual war experience—and it is no greater than that of officers of corresponding age and rank in other European armies—is compensated for by

their energy, enthusiasm, and fanatical devotion to Communism.

It is frequently stated that those officers and men who served in the imperial armies are secretly disloyal to the Soviet government and could not be depended upon in time of war. I doubt, however, whether this rather widely held belief has much foundation in fact, if for no other reason than because those suspected of even the mildest anti-Communist tendencies have been carefully weeded out. There is no denying, of course, that Communism has many bitter enemies in Russia, among both those who grew up under the old régime and those who have come to maturity since the revolution. But, whatever their political opinions, they are before all else *Russians*. Never forget that. And, in case of a foreign war, there is no doubt whatsoever that they would put their political beliefs aside and take up arms in defense of Mother Russia with as much enthusiasm as the bred-in-the-bone Reds would fight for Communism. There could be no greater error than to believe that if faced by a foreign enemy the people of Russia would be found divided.

In considering the efficiency of the Russian fighting machine, however, the fact should not be lost sight of that the military value of an army depends, when all is

said and done, upon two vital factors—supply and transport. In both the Red army is still admittedly deficient. At present neither the munition factories nor the railways are in any condition to withstand the strain of a prolonged campaign. But American engineers and experts are hard at work building new factories and improving the country's means of communication, and both will be in full working order, so the Soviet leaders claim, upon the completion of the Five-Year Plan. My own opinion is that it will take considerably more than that length of time for Russia to place herself economically on a war footing.

Moscow, as I have remarked, has been unflagging in its attempts to convince the Russian people that the capitalist nations are secretly preparing to attack the Soviet Union. Whether the dictators in the Kremlin themselves believe this is beside the question. It is effective propaganda in that it keeps the Russians in a state of constant apprehension and thereby unites them against the outside world.

But Moscow has other strings to its bow, as evidenced by the promptness with which it has turned to its own account certain factors in the Western European political situation. One of these is the steadily increasing animosity between France and Italy.

Now, Russia hates France as bitterly as does Italy, though for entirely different reasons. The Communist dictators believe—or pretend to believe—that France is at the bottom of all their troubles; that the French, in order to recover the debts made by the tsarist government and repudiated by the Soviets, is seeking to bring about an economic blockade of Russia, if not an armed invasion. A certain substance has been lent to this belief by the utterances of more or less responsible French statesmen; by the prohibitive duty—in certain cases as high as 800 per cent—which France has imposed on imports of Russian origin; and by France's activity in the establishment of the *cordon sanitaire*—the name given to the string of smaller states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, which form a barrier between Russia and Western Europe. Certain it is that the Russians consider France their most dangerous and implacable enemy and hate her accordingly.

A common enmity has often provided a basis of understanding between two countries which have nothing else in common, and it is their common hatred of France which explains the understanding—if nothing more—which has been reached between the governments at Moscow and Rome. On the face of things, nothing could seem more fantastic or unlikely than a

rapprochement between Communist Russia and Fascist Italy. Yet such a rapprochement certainly exists, as evidenced by the agreement of the Italian government to guarantee payment for Italian goods exported to Russia, and by the mysterious but widely heralded conference between the Italian and Russian foreign ministers in Milan. Many believe that, when Mussolini has fully developed his plans, this Russo-Italian rapprochement will suddenly blossom out as a hard-and-fast military alliance. Should that come to pass, the anti-French bloc which the Italian dictator has been so sedulously engaged in forming, but which thus far has been taken rather lightly, would be strong enough to dominate the continent.

It would be a curious example of mismating, this threatened—and threatening—alliance between Black-shirt Italy, where everything savoring of Communism is anathema, and Red-shirt Russia, where everything suggestive of Fascism smells of brimstone. But the dictators in the Chigi Palace and the Kremlin have this in common: both are hard-boiled realists; both know exactly where they are going and do not greatly care how they get there. Both are in need of allies, and each sees in the other a powerful ally against the common enemy, France.

Mussolini doubtless argues that, in the event of a Franco-Italian war, the threat of Russia would make it impossible for Poland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania to go to France's aid. Stalin figures that France would not dare to undertake any hostile action against Russia with Italy awaiting her chance just beyond the Alps. The Communist leaders, as I have explained in an earlier chapter, dream of overthrowing capitalism by a series of Communist revolutions in the various capitalist countries, but that does not mean that they are not ready to attain the same end by taking advantage of the dangerous animosities which exist between certain of those countries.

Indeed, it is such animosities as that between Italy and France or between Germany and Poland which may eventually give Communism the opportunity it is so eagerly awaiting. For Communism, be it remembered, is a creed of the wretched and desperate. Its seeds are fertilized by the conditions which produce war. It begins to sprout in time of war. In soil which has been soured by war and human misery it attains its greatest growth. Consequently, a war in Western Europe would, by ruining the nations concerned, produce conditions ideally suited to the needs of Communism.

Can anything be plainer, then, than that the most

effective way to banish the Red specter which is haunting the world is to put an end to war by eliminating the *causes* for war? In preceding chapters of this book I have sought to point out those causes and I shall not review them in detail here. It is enough to repeat that armaments are not in themselves a cause for war, though they undoubtedly contribute to bring on war. The real causes are injustice, oppression, jealousy, greed, hatred, suspicion, fear. Until some means is found to eradicate them Europe will be threatened with war, and as long as she is threatened with war she will be in danger from Communism. That is why I have small patience with the disarmament conferences and naval parleys, the bickerings of the professional diplomats and politicians, the futile fiddlings of the League of Nations, the sonorous but empty pledges of the Locarno and Kellogg pacts. No serious attempt is being made to cut out the canker itself. Why? Because the nations affected are unwilling to stand the cost or the pain of such an operation. So they content themselves by half-heartedly smearing oratorical salve upon the sore.

The fact must never be lost sight of, however, that whatever the nations of Western Europe may eventually do toward composing their differences—and the outlook for their doing anything drastic is not bright

—Russia will never for a moment relax its efforts to sow the seeds of political and industrial discord in the capitalist world. That is why it would be folly for the world to put any faith in the pledges of the Soviet government or to give heed to the pleadings and arguments of its foreign champions. For in cunning and stealth, rather than in frontal attack, lies the threat of the Bear. The warning voiced by Rudyard Kipling a third of a century ago holds as good today as it did then:

*Make ye no truce with Adam-zad—  
the Bear that walks like a Man!*



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